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ABSTRACT

A two-part survey prepared in compliance with the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act assessed the extent of homelessness among Missouri children and the types of educational barriers that they confront. The survey formed the basis for the federally required State Plan for educating homeless children. In this document, an explanation of the plan, entitled "Missouri State Plan for Homeless Children and Youth," precedes the survey report. A comprehensive review of the literature on homelessness, with emphasis on homeless children is also included. One survey, sent to all shelter operators in the state, asked each recipient to count the number of children sleeping in that facility on November 9, 1988. Educational barriers were explored through a second survey sent to all school superintendents. Interviews were conducted with 120 shelter workers, parents living in shelters, school personnel, and children. The following major conclusions are presented: (1) at least 600 children sleep in shelters each night; (2) nearly half are school-age, and most are black and urban; (3) most had at least one sibling who was left somewhere else temporarily; (4) after an initial period of absence from school most of the younger school-age children resumed schooling, but many of the older did not; (5) educational barriers most often cited were uncertainty, poverty, low self-esteem, and family instability; (6) homelessness has a negative effect on educational attainment; (7) few shelters have the educational resources or quiet space that children need to be successful in school; (8) most school districts consider residence a fundamental factor affecting enrollment, and homeless parents are often unaware of the educational rights of their children; and (9) a precise count of the homeless is impossible. Statistical data are included on 19 tables. The appendices comprise a map showing the location and number of homeless shelters serving children and copies of the survey questionnaires. A 93-item bibliography is also appended. (FMW)

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MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF MISSOURI'S HOMELESS CHILDREN

STATE PLAN & SURVEY REPORT



JUNE 1989

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

ROBERT E. BARTMAN, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

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The survey report was prepared by the University of Missouri-Columbia
and the University Extension under a contract with the
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
in compliance with the Stewart B. McKinney Act.

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especially the children, parents and shelter staff
who gave of their time under difficult circumstances.

The Research Staff

Bill Elder • Tanna Klein
University Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis
811 Clark Hall, University of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri 65211
314/882-7396

Carolyn Cook • John Collins • Jeanne Morrison, Ph.D.
College of Human Environmental Sciences Extension
162 Stanley Hall, University of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri 65211
314/882-5114

For more information about the state plan and survey report, contact:

Stephen L. Barr, Coordinator of State Programs
Judith W. Grimes, Supervisor, Homeless Study Project
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102
314/751-3520 or 314/751-8281

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATE PLAN

Page:

Missouri State Plan for Homeless Children and Youth	i
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SURVEY REPORT

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	3
Defining Homelessness	3
Stewart B. McKinney Definition	3
Broader Definitions	4
The "hidden homeless"	4
Victims of family violence	4
Numerical Estimates of Homelessness in the U.S.	5
The One Percent Estimate	5
HUD's estimate	5
Numerical Estimates of Homelessness in Missouri	5
Numerical Estimates of Homelessness Among Children	6
Counting the Homeless	6
Methodologies	7
Inherent problems	7
Varying methods	7
Efforts to quantify homelessness	7
Local Studies	7
Statewide Studies	8
The Nature of Homelessness	8
The Changing Nature of Homelessness	8
Types of homelessness	9
Situational homelessness	9
Chronic homelessness	9
Rural Homelessness	10
Family Homelessness	11
Reasons for Seeking Shelter	11
History of Instability	12
Evidence of Mental Illness	12
Family Homelessness in Missouri	13
A Shortage of Affordable Housing	13
Rising Costs	13
Supply and Demand	14
Discrimination	14

	Page:
Causes of Family Homelessness	14
An Increase in Poverty	14
More Single-Parent Families	14
The Impact of Marital Dissolution	15
The Needs of Homeless Families	15
The Los Angeles Study	15
The Child Welfare League/Traveler's Aid Study	16
Family Shelters	17
Problems of Homeless Children	17
School Attendance	17
Barriers to Education	18
Developmental Problems	18
The St. Louis Salvation Army screening program	19
Health Problems	19
The St. Louis Health Care for the Homeless program	20
The Effects of Stress on Children	21
Childhood Stress and Behavior	21
Daily hassles	21
Undesirable life events	22
Social support	22
Stressors and Symptoms in School Age Children	22
Stressors	22
Symptoms	23
The Impact of Homelessness on Self-Concept	22
The Stigma of Being Homeless	23
The Danger of "Learned Helplessness"	24
The Influence on Self-Esteem	24
School Age Children and Self-Worth	25
The Mental Health Care Needs of Homeless Children	25
Risk Factors	25
Intervention Strategies	26
Primary Prevention Efforts	26
Secondary prevention efforts	27
Environments and Children	27
The Meaning of "Place"	28
Displacement From Home	28
Families	28
Children	29
Overcrowding and Lack of Privacy	29

III. METHODOLOGY	Page: 31
Overview	31
Background	31
Indirect Method	32
Single Contact Censuses	32
Process	33
Enumeration of Providers and Key Informants	33
Shelters of Homeless Children	33
Community Action Agencies	33
School District Superintendents	34
Divisions of Family and Youth Services and County Sheriffs	34
Development of Survey Instruments	34
Shelter survey	34
CAP Agency census form	35
School district survey	35
Key Informant Survey	35
Pretesting	36
Response Rates	36
Shelters	36
School district superintendents	36
Division of Family Services	36
Division of Youth Services and County Sheriffs	37
IV. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	38
Overview	38
Shelters	38
Shelter clientele	39
Programs provided	39
Types of services offered	40
Respondent characteristics	41
Facility characteristics	42
Special facilities for children	42
Identification of special needs	43
Count of homeless children	44
Number of homeless children November 9, 1988	44
Homeless children by race and age	45
Homeless children educational status	46
How typical was Wednesday November 9th	46
Average length of stay	47

Barriers to Education	47
Barriers receiving mean scores greater than 4.00	48
Barriers receiving mean scores between 3.50 and 4.00	48
Barriers receiving mean scores between 3.00 and 3.50	49
Barriers receiving mean scores under 3.00	50
Barriers to education in their away-from school environment	51
Education services needed by the children served	52
School District Superintendents	53
Division of Family Services	53
 V. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SHELTER INTERVIEWS	54
Overview	54
Field Interviews	54
Setting the Context	55
Family Experience	55
Shelter Experience	56
Schooling and Homeless Children	57
Residency requirements	57
Transportation	58
School supplies	58
Behavioral Adjustments	58
The children	58
Teachers and school personnel	59
School Attendance of Homeless Children and Youth	59
Reasons for non-attendance	60
Reasons for erratic attendance	60
Attendance impacts on children	61
Shelter Learning Environments	61
Atmosphere for study	61
Availability of materials	61
Help with homework	62
Factors Affecting Homeless Children's Health and Safety	62
Health issues	62

	Page:
Safety issues	62
On Being Homeless	64
Overview	64
In the words of homeless children	64
In the words of homeless parents	65
In the words of home-school coordinators	66
In the words of shelter staff	66
Comments from the shelter questionnaire	67
VI. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY	69
Overview	69
Residency Requirements and Homeless Children	70
Placement of Homeless Children	70
Enrollment Difficulties for Homeless Children	70
Enrollment Disputes Regarding Placement of Homeless Children	70
Homeless Children and School Records	70
The Enrollment Process	70
Transportation and Homeless Children	71
Communications with the Parents of Homeless Children	71
Successful Programs Serving Homeless Children	71
Assistance Desired	71
Resources Needed	71
Sample Responses to Items	72
VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY	79
APPENDIX A: Location and Number of Homeless Shelters Serving Children (map)	
APPENDIX B: Survey Instruments	
APPENDIX C: Field Notes (unattached)	
APPENDIX D: Superintendent Comments (unattached)	
APPENDIX E: One-way Frequency Distributions, Means and Dataset Documentation (unattached)	

STATE PLAN

MISSOURI STATE PLAN FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

PURPOSE

Title VII-B, Education for Homeless Children and Youth, of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-97) provides state educational agencies (SEAs) with grant funds to carry out policies to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to a free, appropriate public education which would be provided to the children of a resident of a state and is consistent with the state school attendance laws; and for states to review and revise the residency requirements of their compulsory school attendance laws to assure that homeless children within the state are afforded a free and appropriate education.

ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED UNDER THE PROGRAM

Under the Act, as amended, each state is required to:

1. carry out activities to ensure homeless children and youth are afforded a free and appropriate education;
2. establish an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth whose functions are to:
 - a. annually gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the state, the nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, homeless children and youth in the elementary and secondary schools, and the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children;
 - b. develop and carry out a state plan; and
 - c. prepare and submit to the U.S. Secretary of Education reports required under the Act.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE PLAN

Each state receiving a grant is required to adopt a state plan which contains, as a minimum, provisions designed to:

1. Authorize the SEA, LEA, the parent or guardian of the homeless child, the homeless youth, or the applicable social worker, to make determinations regarding the educational disposition of the homeless child.
2. Provide procedures for the resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth.
3. Ensure, to the extent practicable, that the LEAs within the State will comply with the following:
 - a. The LEA must continue the homeless child's or youth's education in the school district of origin for the remainder of the year, or enroll the child in the district in which he or she is actually living, whichever is in the child's or youth's best interest.
 - b. The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents.
 - c. The LEA must provide to the homeless child or youth services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected including educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged; educational programs for the handicapped; programs for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs.
 - d. The LEA must maintain appropriate school records for each homeless child or youth and make the records available in a timely fashion when the child or youth enters a new school district.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the State Plan, the following definitions apply:

Child or youth - includes those persons who, were they children of residents of the State, would be entitled to a free public education.

Homeless - one who (1) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence or (2) has a primary nighttime residence in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private

place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. The term "homeless" or "homeless individual" does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained by an Act of Congress or a State law.

BACKGROUND

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the University of Missouri-Columbia to collect and analyze data regarding the number and location of homeless children and youth and the nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, these children in elementary and secondary schools, and the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children (Appendix "A"). This work was carried out by the College of Human Environmental Sciences/Extension Division, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis. A survey was sent to all identified shelters, Community Action Programs (CAP agencies) and public school districts in the State.

A committee comprised of members of the Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis, shelter operators, school district personnel, and selected state agency personnel met in February to discuss the survey results and to assist DESE in drafting a State plan.

PROVISIONS OF THE STATE PLAN

In carrying out its responsibilities under the Stewart B. McKinney Act, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education makes the following determinations:

1. LEAs are authorized to make determinations in accordance with state and federal laws regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth. Each LEA is requested to appoint a local coordinator for homeless children and youth whose duties are to:
 - a. review all local policies, either written or practiced, and Missouri laws regarding residency, compulsory school attendance, and enrollment in school.
 - b. take steps necessary to remove all barriers to immediate access to education in the LEA.
 - c. develop and implement due process procedures at the local level which, among other things, inform the person(s) representing homeless children or youth in writing of their rights to due process; of the procedure to be followed; and of the person(s), either by name(s) or position, to be

contacted to resolve disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth. In the case where two parties cannot agree as to the appropriate educational placement, the LEA will notify the

Coordinator of School Services for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education who will either personally or through a designated representative make a final determination regarding the placement of the homeless child or youth in question.

- d. inform district school personnel of policies and laws related to residency, compulsory school attendance, and enrollment of students.
2. In the case of a placement dispute between the LEA and representative of a homeless child or youth, the LEA will take all necessary steps to resolve the disagreement at the local level. However, the LEA will inform the party representing the homeless child in writing of local due process procedures. The district will provide all regular educational services which are afforded other children and special education services for which the child or youth is clearly eligible under the law until such time as a final determination is made.

In the case of two or more school districts unable to agree on the appropriate placement of a homeless child or youth, the districts will notify the Coordinator of School Services of the circumstances of the placement and of the reasons for their disagreement. The Coordinator will either personally or through a designated representative make a final determination regarding the placement of the homeless child or youth. The school district in which the homeless child or youth initially enrolls will provide all regular educational services which are afforded other children and special educational services for which the child or youth is clearly eligible under the law from the date of enrollment until such time as a final determination is made. If an adjustment for tuition is necessitated, the Coordinator will make that judgment at the time of the final determination.

3. The SEA will, to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by State law, ensure that local educational agencies within the State will comply with the requirements to:
- a. continue the child's or youth's education in the school district of origin for the remainder of the school year or enroll the child or youth in the school district where the child or youth is actually living, whichever is in the child's or youth's best interest.
 - b. make the placement decision without regard for whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents.

- c. provide each homeless child or youth services comparable to services to other students in the school selected for placement, including educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory education programs, special education programs, programs for students with limited English proficiency, vocational education programs, gifted and talented programs, and school meals programs.
- d. maintain school records of each homeless child or youth so that the records are available in a timely fashion when a child or youth enters a new school district, and in a manner consistent with section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act.

ADDITIONAL PLANNED ACTIVITIES

It is the position of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that Missouri law does not create any barriers to a free and appropriate education for homeless children and youth. Subsection 2 of Section 167.151, RSMo, provides:

"Orphan children, children with only one parent living, and children whose parents do not contribute to their support—if the children are between the ages of six and twenty years and are unable to pay tuition—may attend the schools of any district in the state in which they have a permanent or temporary home without paying a tuition fee."

It is also believed and substantiated by the survey of homeless children and youth that, by and large, school personnel are making a good faith effort to enroll and educate homeless children and youth when they arrive at the school. However, it is also believed that many educators and community people are not aware of the problems confronting homeless children and youth and of the need for actively encouraging the enrollment in school of homeless children and youth.

To communicate the needs, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will, as one of the activities of the second year of the program, develop and disseminate to all LEAs an administrative manual which includes:

1. a summary of the numbers and location of homeless children and youth and of the barriers to education identified in the survey of homeless children and youth conducted by the University of Missouri.
2. an explanation of the State's compulsory school attendance laws and of other laws and court decisions relating to residency, school attendance and enrollment.

3. a description of pertinent policies and procedures to be followed to assure homeless children and youth services comparable to services made available to other students. Qualified school personnel will assist selected Department personnel in reviewing and recommending alternatives to current procedures which LEAs may legally use in assisting eligible homeless children and youth gain access to services in the areas of compensatory education, special education, vocational education, gifted and talented education, programs for students with limited English proficiency and school meals programs.
4. awareness activities, instructional strategies, and classroom and school activities designed to improve the effectiveness of education to homeless children and youth.

The Department will also undertake a review of all state-funded programs administered by the SEA to identify rules, guidelines and funding procedures which may inhibit the LEAs' ability to provide services to homeless children and youth and to make recommendations regarding rules, guidelines and procedures which might reasonably be modified to more adequately address the special needs of homeless children and youth without sacrificing the integrity or standards of the programs.

The Department will, with the assistance of other state agencies, publish a listing of agencies and organizations in each region of the State which are available to assist in meeting the needs of homeless children and youth.

*Adopted by the Missouri State Board of Education
April 20, 1989*

SURVEY REPORT

LIST OF TABLES

	Page:
Table 1: Shelter clientele	39
Table 2: Programs provided	40
Table 3: Types of services offered	41
Table 4: Respondent characteristics	41
Table 5: Facility characteristics	42
Table 6: Special facilities for children	43
Table 7: Identification of special needs	44
Table 8: Number of homeless children November 9, 1988	45
Table 9: Homeless children by race and age	45
Table 10: Homeless children educational status	46
Table 11: How typical was Wednesday November 9th	46
Table 12: Average length of stay	47
Table 13: Barriers receiving mean scores of greater than 4.00	48
Table 14: Barriers receiving mean scores between 3.50 and 4.00	48
Table 15: Barriers receiving mean scores between 3.00 and 3.50	49
Table 16: Barriers receiving mean scores under 3.00	51
Table 17: Barriers to education in the away-from school environment	51
Table 18: Education services needed by the children served	52
Table 19: School district estimates of homeless children	53

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the extent of homelessness among Missouri children, and the types of educational barriers that they confront as a result of their homelessness. It includes a comprehensive review of the literature on homelessness with a particular focus on homeless children.

A conservative, unduplicated estimate of the number of homeless children in Missouri was built by counting the number of children sleeping in Missouri shelters for the homeless on November 9, 1988. Because of the nature of homelessness, it is impossible to achieve a complete enumeration of the number of homeless children. No one knows where all the homeless might be. However, by adopting a narrow definition of homelessness and making as complete a count of facilities as practical, this report establishes the minimum reasonable estimate of homeless children in Missouri. There may be many more than indicated, but certainly no fewer.

Questionnaire surveys were conducted among various types of service providers to assess the relative significance of possible educational barriers among the children they serve. All Missouri school superintendents were queried regarding the likely impact of school policies and practices on the educational experiences of homeless children. Also, nearly 120 personal field interviews were conducted with shelter workers, parents living in the shelters, school personnel and children.

Subsequent sections of this report explore issues of homelessness in some detail. The major conclusions are outlined below:

- At least 600 homeless children sleep in shelters for the homeless each night in Missouri. On an annualized basis a minimum of 6,500 children spend some of their nights in Missouri shelters for the homeless.
- About 40% of these children are under 5 years old, and nearly half are school age children. Most are black and urban.
- Most of the children staying in shelters have at least one sibling who was left somewhere else temporarily. Although not included in this study's count of homeless children, these other children, separated from their families, are clearly in homeless circumstances.
- After an initial period of absence from school most of the younger school aged children at shelters resumed schooling, many older school aged children did not.
- According to shelter workers, parents and school personnel, the kinds of educational barriers that homeless children confront most often are uncertainty, poverty, low self-esteem and family instability.

- For children, homelessness is often an especially stressful lesson in what it means to be very poor. Some of what children learn in the process can assault their self-esteem in ways that thwart educational attainment and other life chances.
- Very few Missouri shelters have the educational resources or quiet space that children require to be successful at school.
- Most school districts consider residence in the district a fundamental factor affecting enrollment. Homeless parents are often confused and fearful of the consequences their homelessness may have on the educational rights of their children.
- A precise count of the homeless is impossible. Thus, it is not surprising that there are divergent perceptions of the problem. For example, the total number of homeless children that school superintendents said were enrolled in the 1987-88 school year was less than the number of school aged children known to have been in Missouri shelters on a single night in November, 1988.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act mandates the development of a state plan regarding the educational needs of homeless children. To help inform the public policy discussions surrounding development of the Missouri plan we have prepared a review of the literature regarding homelessness, family homelessness, and children of the homeless. We have included sections on early childhood development, childhood stress and some mental health concerns which we believe are relevant to an informed perspective on homeless children.

The amount of specific research on homeless children is not very great. This is especially troubling because according to most experts children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. Concern for homeless children is well placed. They are at risk. Most are normal children whose basic needs are not being met. They are victims of economic circumstances that they did not create, but from which they may reap profound developmental difficulties. Such difficulties engender not only personal troubles, but losses of human capital for which our society may eventually pay a heavy price.

To help understand the nature of homelessness it is useful to pose some basic questions. What is homelessness? How many people are homeless? Who is homeless? Why are they homeless? What can be done about it? In the following review we have tried to organize what is currently known about these basic questions.

DEFINING HOMELESSNESS

Who are the homeless? That question is subject to some debate. Although varying definitions have been used in studies to count the homeless, there is general agreement that if a person is sleeping outside, on the streets or in an emergency shelter or transitional program, they are homeless. The definition used to determine who is homeless affects both the size and characteristics of the population considered "homeless."

The Stewart B. McKinney Definition

The definition used to establish who is "homeless" according to the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act specifically refers to a "homeless individual" as:

- (1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or,
- (2) an individual who has primary night-time residence that is in:
 - (a) a supervised publically or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);

(b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized;

(c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (Public Law 100-77-July 22, 1987).

Broader Definitions

Other living situations have sometimes been defined as homelessness. For example, some studies have included residents of half-way houses and long-term detoxification centers. Other researchers and advocates for the homeless have broadened the definition of "homelessness" to include those without "adequate" shelter and lack of community "ties" (Peroff, 1987, p.37). Not surprisingly, there has been much debate on what measure of "adequate" should be used, and what defines community "ties."

The "Hidden Homeless"

The question of families "doubling up" is often considered when trying to define who is homeless. Some have called those who live in the homes of family or friends, the "hidden homeless." Others contend that if someone is living with family members they are not homeless. Interestingly, differing perceptions on this issue also exist among those who are directly involved; some people will feel homeless and others do not.

Victims of Family Violence

Many homeless mothers are victims of family violence, "which suggests considerable overlap between families residing in family shelters and those residing in battered women's shelters (Ryback and Bassuk, 1986). Generally, a woman fleeing an abusive relationship turns to a battered women's shelter" (Institute of Medicine, 1988, p.13). Nationwide, there are approximately 8,000 shelter spaces for battered women and children. The location of these centers is usually confidential. Consequently, not all studies include them.

NUMERICAL ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

There are two main sources for estimates of the extent of homelessness nationally. Both of them have been disputed. About the only undisputed finding is that homelessness is growing.

The One Percent Estimate

The most dramatic numbers come from The Community for Creative Non-Violence, an advocacy group which reported to a Congressional committee in 1980 that approximately one percent of the population, or 2.2 million people lacked shelter. They reportedly arrived at that conclusion based on information received from 100 organizations and agencies in 25 cities and states (Hombs & Snyder, 1982). Since then, this estimate has been widely quoted by the media and widely disputed by researchers as being unscientific. In fact, Redburn and Buss (1987) say, "there is virtually no evidence that suggest a rate of homelessness as high as one percent of the population..."

HUD's Estimate

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has conducted the only government study to determine the extent of homelessness nationally. While it too has been criticized on methodological grounds, the HUD study remains the soundest national estimate available.

HUD's researchers concluded that the "most reliable range" estimate, as of January, 1984 was between 250,000 and 350,000 homeless people nationwide. Redburn and Buss (1987) conclude that the HUD study, "constitutes by far the most credible information on the extent of homelessness nationally."

The HUD study used four independent methods for deriving a national estimate of homelessness. HUD acknowledged the inherent shortcomings of each of the four methods. For example, estimates from a sample of urban areas were used as a basis for extrapolating the estimates to other metropolitan and rural areas.

NUMERICAL ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS IN MISSOURI

The 1989 Missouri Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan (CHAP) states, "because the homeless are for the most part disconnected from the systems that collect census data, it is not possible to produce an accurate number of homeless in Missouri." Estimates, however, have been made by a number of credible sources and have been generally accepted as believable.

The CHAP (1989) states that there has been a notable increase in requests for assistance from women and children. The CHAP reported statistics from the Kansas City Hotline for the Homeless (January 1 - August 23, 1987). There were 3,453 unduplicated calls representing 7,439 homeless people. There were 2,934 children represented in the family units who called. The CHAP also reports that in St. Louis it is estimated that between 8,000 and 10,000 unduplicated persons are served in emergency shelters each year and that approximately 70 percent are women and children (CHAP, p.2).

In 1987, a Task Force on Homelessness convened by then Lt. Governor Harriet Woods, produced a report indicating that there were a minimum of 30,000 homeless people in the state during 1986. Key informants, they said, suggest that at least one-half are families and at least one-third are children. Current estimates of the total number of "visible" homeless in the state may be as high as 40,000, according to the Missouri Association of Social Welfare.

NUMERICAL ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG CHILDREN

Nationwide, experts say that families with children are the fastest rising sub-group among the homeless population (Wright et al., 1988). In the twenty-five cities surveyed in 1986 by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, families with children comprised 28 percent of all homeless people.

There have been no systematic studies seeking to provide an estimate of the number of homeless children nationwide. The magnitude of the problem, however, can be seen in even the most conservative estimates:

"If there are approximately 735,000 people homeless on any given night, and 25 percent of these people are members of intact families (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1986), of whom 55 percent are children, then a minimum of 100,000 children are homeless on any given night of the year. This figure includes only children of intact families; it does not include runaway, throwaway, or abandoned children on the streets or in institutions" (Institute of Medicine, 1988).

COUNTING THE HOMELESS

Difficulties counting the homeless abound due to the shifting nature of the population. Measurement problems have forced the use of rough estimates derived from information by "experts". Since homelessness is not a "pool, but is a stream," (Rouse, 1988) quantifying the number of homeless people will never produce an exact count.

Methodologies

Inherent Problems

Counting the homeless is, as Redburn and Buss say, "a social scientist's nightmare." There are a number of substantive problems inherent in counting the homeless. The many causes of homelessness do not make homeless people easy to find. Many homeless maintain an inconspicuous existence and remain essentially invisible to those who try to count them. Being homeless frequently requires constant moving and relocating and it is often difficult to distinguish a homeless person from a very poor person with a place to stay for at least awhile. Hostile environments also make searching out the homeless in abandoned buildings, culverts, alleys and city parks a potentially dangerous job.

Varying Methods

Redburn and Buss (1987, p.15) point out that some confusion about the number of homeless people has been caused by the failure of those who keep statistics on this population to differentiate the three different ways the homeless have been counted --

- 1) single point in time,
- 2) numbers over a period of time,
- 3) total number served or counted by a single group or agency over a period of time.

The media, Redburn and Buss say, mix the numbers derived from varying counts and further confuse the public perception of just how many people are homeless.

Efforts to Quantify Homelessness

There have been many local and state studies to estimate the number of homeless, but only one national study has been attempted. Nearly all of the studies have been done in urban areas with only a few attempts to study rural homelessness.

Local Studies

Most of the local studies have focused on counting homeless in shelters. People living on the streets, in the homes of others, or in other temporary lodgings have rarely been counted. Redburn and Buss' review of studies on homelessness found no studies which scientifically estimated the number of individuals and families "doubling up" in the homes of others. According to Redburn and Buss, "Few studies of which we are aware have received the care in design and rigor of execution that are

called for, given the difficulty of the research problem" (Redburn and Buss, 1987, p.19).

Statewide Studies

Compared to the number of local studies, relatively few statewide studies had been done prior to Redburn and Buss' review in 1987. Still, little has been published, although states are now required by the Stewart B. McKinney Act to research their homeless population and obtain a yearly assessment of need. In addition to the methodology problems plaguing local studies, statewide estimation studies have serious shortcomings when they attempt to extrapolate to areas of the state for which little data is available.

The state of New York, with the largest homeless population, has conducted one of the most thorough statewide studies. The New York study combined local studies of shelters and street people, census data, key informant surveys and other sources of data to derive a statewide estimate. California used local estimates obtained from shelter operators and aggregated them using the lowest number wherever a range of local estimates were available.

THE NATURE OF HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is not an absolute condition, but deprivation which varies by degrees. The extent of deprivation depends on several factors:

- (1) how the conditions of a person's shelter depart from standard housing,
- (2) the stability of the location,
- (3) how long the conditions continue,
- (4) the relative amount of material poverty and social isolation that the individual must endure (Redburn and Buss, 1987, p.15).

The Changing Nature of Homelessness

The research on homelessness has historically been dominated by studies about the "skid-row" male, the alcoholic, the mentally ill. For years, homeless women have been "sequestered in cheap, run-down, single-room occupancy hotels," (Sullivan & Damrosch, 1987, p.83), even so, they have been typified as a "sociological mystery" Theodore Caplow's reference in the forward to Bahr and Garrett's book, Women Alone 1976, p.XV) is to the image of the homeless woman as the stereotypical "bag lady." However, in the past few years, it has become more and more the case that the homeless woman is a mother with children in her care.

Types of Homelessness

Jahiel (1987) distinguishes between two types of homelessness -- situational, which usually lasts for a short period of time and is not recurring, and a more persistent type, chronic homelessness, which is more entrenched and is associated with considerably more hardship.

Situational homelessness may occur by fire, flood or other disaster which destroys a family's home, but because the family has other resources, relocation takes place quickly. Another example is when unemployment prompts an individual or family to move to a new city. During the transition time, they may live in their car while searching for a job and a place to live. Jahiel says that all cases of situational homelessness have the following in common --

- (1) the homeless person has had life experiences and has the state of mind, physical ability, and social support needed to take appropriate steps to gain back a home;
 - (2) resources are available to permit stabilization, respite and self-management while taking these steps; these resources may belong to the homeless, or they may be provided by friends, family, or agencies;
 - (3) the homeless person has marketable skills and the desire to work;
 - (4) the local housing market is such that affordable housing is relatively easy to find, with or without the help of a governmental subsidy
- (Jahiel, 1987, pp.101-102).

Chronic homelessness lasts for a relatively long period of time or recurs at short intervals. It is more difficult to overcome and brings with it sometimes pernicious consequences. Chronic homelessness is often the result of serious resource deficits which plague the individual or family --

- (1) poverty, not only of the homeless person, but also of significant others (family, friends, etc.);
- (2) lack of job opportunities for the underskilled or disabled homeless persons;
- (3) difficulty managing the steps necessary to get a home or shelter because of the lack of needed resources such as identification papers, bank references, discrimination, or lack of know-how required; and,
- (4) unavailability of low-income housing.

As the length of time a person spends homeless increases, other factors begin to impact on the situation --

- (5) finding subsistence and shelter becomes a struggle to protect oneself and one's possessions; this effort may

consume so much time and energy that other activities become impossible;

(6) the homeless person's appearance begins to deteriorate; looking like a "street person," adds an additional handicap;

(7) injuries, illnesses, malnutrition, lack of sleep or robberies may further reduce resources and capabilities;

(8) the experiences of repeated failures, rejection, exploitation or injury may lead to apathy, depression, extreme suspiciousness or even suicidal acts.

If caught in a downward spiral of futility, daily survival for the chronically homeless becomes an all-consuming struggle and "the future becomes a lost concept" (Jahiel, p.106).

Rural Homelessness

"The Homeless Crisis From A Rural Perspective," (Housing Assistance Council, 1987) is a report of a nationwide survey of 98 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) serving mostly rural areas. The study was done by the National Association of Community Action Agencies (NACAA) in early 1987. The study was an attempt to find out the causes of homelessness in those areas, as well as information about available resources. The CAAs surveyed had been previously identified as providing emergency assistance to homeless people. NACAA received 46 responses from 36 states including 14 from the Midwest. Three of the responses were from CAAs located in Missouri (in Joplin, Trenton, and Richland).

The NACAA survey asked these rural service providers (40% were executive directors, 17% planners and the others outreach or community service directors) about their perceptions of the rural homeless. The CAAs were allowed to define who they viewed as homeless, and therefore, the study is broader than one defined by the Stewart B. McKinney definition. It includes those in imminent danger of being evicted from their shelter and those currently living in substandard and overcrowded housing.

More than three-fourths of the respondents reported an increase in rural homelessness between 1981/82 and 1986/87. Of those reporting an increase, 38 percent said it was a significant increase. An increase in rural "family" homelessness was reported by 36.8 percent of respondents. (Families included single parents with children, and married and unmarried couples with children.)

Unemployment was considered by 60 percent of the CAAs to be the greatest cause of homelessness in their area. More than half of the respondents indicated that with current resources available, less than 30 percent of their communities' homeless needs were being met.

Housing assistance was reported to be "very much needed" by 70.7 percent of the CAA respondents; 83 percent reported providing some sort of housing assistance

program. According to respondents, it is common for long-term residents of a rural community to move around from one friend or family household to another.

NACAA made several recommendations for future research. They recommended a follow-up survey of rural CAAs to identify continuing or new trends in rural homelessness, and an inquiry into the long-term effects of homelessness on children.

FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

Most homeless families are headed by women with 2 or 3 children (Bassuk et al. 1986). The mothers tend to be in their late 20s (Bassuk et al., 1986; McChesney, 1986; Towber, 1986a). Homeless families that include both parents tend to be more common in rural areas than in urban areas. Most of the children are under the age of five, and are spending their critical development years without the stability and security of a permanent home (Towber, 1986a,b; Bassuk and Rubin, 1987; Wright and Weber, 1987).

Reasons for Seeking Shelter

The three main reasons for seeking shelter given by families with children in Massachusetts were:

- 1) no longer able to remain in residences involving multi-family occupancy (46%),
- 2) loss of residence (22%), and
- 3) stranded or relocating (8%).

In the Massachusetts study (Bassuk, 1986), 57 percent of the mothers said that they had lost their home due to housing problems. They cited eviction, non-payment of rent, condominium conversion and especially overcrowding as causes. Many families had moved many times in the five years prior to becoming homeless, but most had moved within the same community. Some had moved from other shelters or on the streets (33%), others had lived in hotels or motels (48%), but doubling up in overcrowded apartments with family or friends was reported by the majority (85%) of families. Overall, one-third had lived in a combination of two of these situations. During the twelve month period before becoming homeless, the pattern of instability was greater. On the average, families had moved four times (Bassuk, Lauriat and Rubin, 1986).

Unlike the homeless mentally ill, homeless mothers do not have psychotic episodes, but as Bassuk (1986) reported, "the majority had serious emotional vulnerabilities and personality problems that in part accounted for some of the difficulties they were suffering" (p. 22). As Bassuk (1986) says, with such histories of instability, it is not surprising that these women are "having trouble establishing themselves as independent adults," (p.22). The shelter staff interviewed in Massachusetts often reported the need to work with the mothers on parenting issues.

For many of these women, Bassuk said, their own difficulty in parenting is the result of having been inadequately cared for as children (p.22).

History of Instability

Many families who are homeless, especially single mothers, are isolated with few, if any, supportive relationships. In one study more than 25 percent named their child or children as their major support relationship. The only friends some had were those they had made at the shelter (McChesney, 1986; Bassuk et al., 1986).

Clinical interviews were conducted with 116 homeless mothers, 11 homeless fathers, and 205 children staying in 14 family shelters and 10 welfare hotels in Massachusetts (Bassuk et al., 1986). Data analyzed for 80 of the families (151 children) indicate that the majority of the women had lived in unstable situations prior to coming to the shelter. Forty-five percent of the mothers had a history of abusive relationships with either a spouse or mate, but this was not generally reported as the immediate cause of their homelessness.

Evidence of Mental Illness

There is anecdotal evidence that many single homeless women are mentally ill, although there has never been a randomly selected sample who were studied. A study of indicators of psychiatric disturbances (history of hospitalization for mental illness, current symptoms, etc.) was conducted in the New York City shelter system. Thirty-seven percent of the women reported indicators of psychiatric disturbance as opposed to 21 percent of men.

Women who are heads of households and are homeless with children have a much different psychiatric profile than single women (Bassuk, 1986; Inst. of Medicine p. 57). In a study of two-thirds of the family shelters in Massachusetts, Bassuk found only a small incidence of substance abuse (although because hotels and motels were not included the authors feel this may be understated). Among the mothers, 3 percent were diagnosed as schizophrenic, 10 percent were found to have major affective disorders, and personality disorders (not classified as major mental illness) were found among 71 percent (Inst. of Medicine, p.57).

In an earlier study of homeless families in a New York residential facility (1978-1979), Michael Phillips found that 36 percent of the mothers reported having had a mental illness or problems with their "nerves" in the past. Almost 20 percent said that they had been hospitalized for a mental illness and 17 percent said they had been treated as an outpatient for a mental disorder (Mental Health News Bulletin, Spring 1987).

Family Homelessness in Missouri

The St. Louis Reception Center maintains a city-wide data base of information about persons seeking shelter through the referral network. For a period from May 1986 through April 1987, the Reception Center documented 1,642 unduplicated cases with one or more children. There were an average of 2.25 children per case for those reporting any children. Data was analyzed for the 743 who were categorized as being immediately in need of shelter (Kreuger et al., 1988).

Almost 90 percent of the families were single women with children seeking shelter. Approximately 68 percent of those with children who were seeking shelter were Black. Only 36 percent of the White cases involved children. This ethnic distribution may reflect the much higher representation of Blacks in the City of St. Louis, but is also important in understanding the "relative distributions of ethnicity of those seeking shelters" (Kreuger et al., 1988). As reason for seeking shelter, family disturbances were reported less frequently in Kreuger's St. Louis study than other studies. For example, while Kreuger reported 10.5 percent family disturbances, 45 percent of homeless mothers reported by Ryback and Bassuk (1986) were victims of family violence. Bassuk (1986) reported 22 percent of the women in her study were involved in child abuse investigations.

The Kansas City Joint Committee on Homelessness published a report, "Hope for the Homeless" in January 1988. At that time they estimated 40 percent of the 10,000 homeless in the city were families. Families make up the single largest and fastest growing segment of the homeless population, and most of them are single women with children. Children comprise 30 percent of the homeless population in Kansas City.

A SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Missouri Association of Social Welfare report, "Low Income Housing in Missouri" (1987) states, "Although there are dozens of paths to homelessness, including poverty, mental illness, domestic violence, etc., the major cause is the extreme shrinkage of the low income housing stock." MASW reports that in Missouri, the shortfall may be as much as 70,000 units.

Rising Costs

Housing costs in both purchase and rental markets were being driven to record levels by high inflation rates and high interest rates during the 1970s and early 1980s. By 1983, the National Housing Conference estimated that only half of the households who "typically" would have bought in previous years, were able to purchase a mid-priced home. The result has been in another 4 million households in the rental market causing vacancy rates in many areas of the country to fall below the normal rate of 5 percent.

Supply and Demand

The supply of low-cost rental housing was declining at the same time that demand for affordable housing was increasing. "The State of the Nation's Housing," prepared by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (1988) documented the magnitude of this shortage estimating that more than one million of the nation's non-subsidized rental units were lost between 1974 and 1983 due to abandonment or upgrading to serve higher income residents. This situation was exacerbated by the Reagan administration's decision to reduce the role of the federal government in the low-income housing market with cut-backs of more than 60 percent in funding for housing programs.

Discrimination

Discrimination has been reported in some areas of the country as a major factor in access to housing, especially for large families. The recent amendment of 1988 to the Fair Housing Act makes discrimination against families with children illegal. Implementation of this new law which goes into effect on March 12, 1989, could lessen the number of families who face situational homelessness because they can't find a place to rent.

CAUSES OF FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

The "new homelessness" among families is said to have its roots in general economic forces (Sullivan & Damrosch, 1987; McChesney, 1986; Bassuk, 1986). Since 1980, the economic situation of families in the U.S. has become increasingly precarious.

An Increase in Poverty

The poverty rate began to increase after remaining at 12.7 percent between 1973 and 1979. In 1984, the poverty rate reached 17.4 percent, its highest level in 19 years. Danziger and Gottschalk (1985) found that during the period between 1973 to 1984, the mean income of the poorest 20 percent of families dropped by 34 percent; that of the next poorest fifth fell by 20 percent. During this same period, the income of the highest fifth fell by only 2 percent.

More Single-Parent Families

By 1984, 10.9 million children were being raised solely by their mothers. Patrick Moynihan in his book, Family and Nation says that women and children are at special risk of homelessness. In 1984, 23 million Whites, 9.5 million Blacks, and 4.8 million Hispanics were poor. Poverty is faced mostly by women (two out of three poor persons

are women) and children (one in five children live below the poverty line) (Sullivan & Damrosch, 1987, p.92).

The Impact of Marital Dissolution

Other trends have severely impacted on the well-being of families headed by women. There are approximately one million divorces each year. Lenore Weitzman reported in her book, The Divorce Revolution (1985), the results of a study sampling 3,000 divorce cases. Weitzman found an immediate drop of 73 percent in the standard of living of women and their children following a divorce, while the former husbands experienced a 42 percent increase in theirs.

No-fault divorce (law in 48 states) has displaced women and children from their homes, further exacerbating the economic hardship described by Weitzman. Prior to no-fault divorce settlements, the family home was likely to have been awarded to the parent with custody of the children, usually the mother. Recent changes in divorce laws have frequently resulted in the forced sale of the family home in order to give the husband half of the proceeds.

THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS FAMILIES

There have only been a few systematic studies describing the status and unmet needs of homeless families or the critical needs of children such as health status (Wright and Weber, 1987); emotional problems (Bassuk et al., 1986; Bassuk and Rubin, 1987); nutritional status (Acker et al., 1987); and problems in education and learning (Bassuk et al., 1986; Bassuk and Rubin, 1987).

Most of the literature on the needs of homeless families has been anecdotal with large regional differences apparent (Institute of Medicine, p.12). In 1985, the Ford Foundation funded one of the first studies on homeless families in the Los Angeles, California area (McChesney, 1986).

The Los Angeles Study

The Los Angeles study (McChesney, 1986) provided an exploratory study into the nature of homelessness among families. Data collected from 87 families interviewed in five shelters indicated that --

- 1) minority families and families headed by single-mothers were homeless in disproportionate numbers,
- 2) most families had very low-incomes prior to becoming homeless,
- 3) while the lack of money to secure housing was the ultimate cause of homelessness for all the families, the major precipitating event was eviction for about 40 percent of the sample, economic troubles ensuing from

migration for about 30 percent, and relationship troubles with male partners for about 26 percent of the sample,
4) families were unable to turn for help to their families of origin because their kin were either deceased, lived in another geographic area, or they were estranged from them.

The Child Welfare League/Traveler's Aid Study

The Child Welfare League and Traveler's Aid International conducted a joint study of Homeless Children and Families (1987) that was unique because the homeless population sampled was not limited to emergency shelters. Studies based on shelter space alone have serious limitations because families are often separated due to constraints of the shelters (i.e., lack of beds, age and gender criteria, etc.) CWL/TAS collected data from the first 50 individuals and the first 50 families who came to the Traveler's Aid Agency in each of eight cities from mid-October through mid-December 1986 (Missouri was not represented). Most of the people were traveling to find jobs (45%), or to where they had family and friends (42%); however, some were seeking permanent housing (11%). They reported leaving their last permanent housing because they lost their job (44%), they could not pay the rent (15%) or a family crisis (half of which were spouse abuse cases) had forced their leaving (15%).

Traveler's Aid collected data on 163 families who had 331 children with them and 73 minor children living elsewhere. The children accompanying their homeless families were, on the average, 6 years old. Ten percent were in need of health care, and 10 percent were suspected of being abused and/or neglected. Of the 73 children living elsewhere, 53 percent were with a former spouse, 11 percent were with a current spouse, 3 percent were in foster care, 23 percent were with relatives and 10 percent were with friends. Implications of this are clear, homelessness is causing many families to separate physically or to "let go" of the older children.

The families seeking help from the Traveler's Aid agencies were most often from outside the local area (80%). They came from 30 different states and were traveling to 21 different states. The families reported that on the previous night, 27 percent had been with friends or relatives, 25 percent had been in an emergency shelter, 21 percent found shelter in a bus or train station or a vehicle, 16 percent had spent the night in their own homes and 11 percent had spent the previous night in a hotel, motel or rooming house.

Family and friends played an important role in assisting the families in the Traveler's Aid study. More than half of them (57%) had lived or were living with family and friends. More than three-fourths (77%) of the families who had been homeless more than three months had lived with family and/or friends. However, this help did not offer permanent solutions since 42 percent had been asked to leave or the housing was inadequate.

Family Shelters

The number of family shelters has grown over the past few years in response to the need for them. The services offered at many of the family shelters have been developed as the needs of families have become more apparent. The concept of "emergency shelter" has evolved from overnight emergency lodging to expanded supportive programs. Many shelters offer crisis intervention and stabilization as well as transitional housing and resettlement assistance. Some even offer follow-up to promote reintegration back into the community. The Salvation Army-Midland Division which includes the St. Louis area, has developed a "Five Stage Continuum Model," which includes crisis intervention, stabilization, transitional housing, resettlement assistance as well as a prevention program to avert the homeless crisis stage.

PROBLEMS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN

There is a scant body of literature on the problems of homeless children. Special problems confront homeless school age children as a result of not having a permanent home. Often these problems impact on their education. Recent studies have documented developmental and health problems among children associated with chronic homelessness and poverty.

School Attendance

A number of researchers have reported erratic school attendance and truancy problems among homeless children. Almost one fourth (60/242) of the mothers for the St. Louis Health Care for the Homeless program with children old enough to be in school reported irregular school attendance.

The Traveler's Aid Program and Child Welfare League (1987), in a preliminary report of 163 families (with 331 children) in eight cities, stated 43 percent of the children were not regularly attending school. Another study of 52 families residing in five New York City Welfare Hotels found that 30 percent of the children missed between 4 and 10 days a month, and 10 percent missed more than 10 days a month (more than half of all school days) (Inst. of Medicine, 1988, p.14).

Serious problems in school, with a two year lag in development for age-appropriate reading and math were reported in Kronenfelds' (1980) study of homeless children in New York City. Discipline and truancy problems were also reported to be occurring frequently.

Barriers to Education

The Center for Law and Education (CL&E) report on barriers to education faced by homeless children stated:

"Everyday, these children confront abject poverty, poor nutrition, transiency and frequent absences, in efforts to complete their homework, remain attentive in class and continue to advance their studies. In some cases, the stress of homelessness and the need to meet other family needs relegates a child's education to low priority status" (CL&E, 1987, p.2).

The results of a collaborative study by the Center for Law and Education, the National Coalition for the Homeless, the Homeless Information Exchange and the Network of Runaway and Youth Services corroborate with anecdotal information published in the popular press the first-hand reports of shelter providers regarding barriers to education. Approximately 110 shelter providers throughout the country were surveyed, and one-third reported that they were aware of cases of denial of educational access to the homeless. According to the Center for Law and Education Newsnotes (Sept., 1987, No. 38), shelter providers reported the following barriers to education:

- (1) instances in which residency laws were used to bar continuation in a school while a period of homelessness required a move outside of the school's attendance area;
- (2) instances in which residency laws were used to prevent enrollment in a school serving the area where a homeless student is temporarily housed;
- (3) instances in which guardianship laws required a child to live with either a parent or a legal guardian in order to qualify as a resident of the school attendance area;
- (4) guardianship laws which affect children separated temporarily from their homeless parents and living with friends or relatives, as well as homeless runaway youth (CL&E, 1988, p.2).

Almost one-quarter of the CL&E survey respondents said that they were also aware of cases where a student's educational access had been hampered by the inability to obtain prior school and health records. Nineteen percent said they knew of cases in which special education and other special services were denied, and 15 percent indicated that inadequate or unavailable transportation had been a barrier to educational access.

Developmental Problems

Several studies have documented serious developmental, emotional and learning problems among homeless children. In 1980, Kronenfeld et al., found that homeless children in a New York City shelter were two or more years behind their age-

appropriate grade level in reading and math. They also reported discipline and truancy problems.

The children in the Massachussets study (Bassuk, 1986) exhibited a wide range of psychological, social, and cognitive problems as well as developmental delays. One third of the homeless children had difficulty not only with language skills but also with fine and gross motor skills and personal development. They found almost half of the school age children to be extremely depressed and anxious. Using the Children's Depression Inventory and the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale, they found that almost one half required further clinical evaluation. Scores from the Depression Inventory indicated that "one-third of them had presumptive evidence of a clinical depression" (p.23).

Ellen Bassuk, M.D. and her colleagues (1986,87,88) administered the Denver Developmental test to children in Boston's shelters and found that 47 percent of the children tested were in need of further evaluations in at least one of four areas: language skills, gross motor and fine motor skills and social, emotional development. Thirty-two percent scored poorly in two or more of the areas tested.

The St. Louis Salvation Army Screening Program

Through the St. Louis Salvation Army Developmental Screening Program two assessment instruments were administered in 1986 to 107 children (58 girls, 49 boys) who were residents of the emergency lodge. The Slosson Intelligence Test - Revised was used to screen for cognitive development. The Slosson is an abbreviated version of the Stanford-Binet and is highly verbal in nature. Children in the study group scored at such a level as to indicate that cognitive development might be an area of concern with these children (Kreuger et al., 1988).

A test of receptive vocabulary, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised, was also administered to the children at the St. Louis Lodge. Eighty percent of the children scored below the 50th percentile. These results indicate the potential for later learning difficulties (Kreuger et al., 1988).

Health Problems

Bassuk and Rosenberg (1988) say, the health problems of homeless children, when compared to most poor children, are made markedly worse by the situation of their homelessness.

"Very little has been published on homeless children in general and even less on the health problems of this group....The general patterns of illness are not uncharacteristic of children's illnesses in general...although the absolute rates at which most of these disorders occur among homeless children are inordinately high" (Wright et al., 1987, p.61).

Chronic physical disorders have been found to be nearly twice as common among children of homeless families as children in the general population. A study by Wright and Weber (1987) found illnesses such as anemia, malnutrition and refractory asthma to be much more common among homeless children. Chronic health conditions ranging from cardiac disease, anemia, peripheral vascular disorders to neurological disorders were also frequently diagnosed. There were no significant differences between boys and girls.

Acker et al. (1987) reported that more than half of homeless children are not up-to-date on immunizations. As a result of homelessness, children are also a high-risk group for such illnesses as diphtheria, tetanus, measles and polio. In addition, Acker reported that homeless children between the ages of 6 months and two years are at high-risk for iron deficiency and probably other nutritional deficits.

Reporting after the first year of a national effort, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Health Care for the Homeless Program found that among the 1,028 homeless children seen by HCHC health teams, there was a higher incidence of minor upper respiratory infections, minor skin ailments, ear disorders, gastrointestinal problems, trauma, eye disorders, and lice, as well as infectious childhood diseases (Wright & Weber, 1987).

St. Louis Health Care for the Homeless Program

Children's health screening is a major part of the Health Care for the Homeless program in St. Louis. HCHC does on-site screenings in health screenings for detection of acute and chronic illness, and basic treatment and referrals for comprehensive treatment are provided. During the first three years of the program, more than 800 children were screened in shelters by the HCHC health team. Data has been analyzed for the 728 for whom complete information was available (Kreuger et al. 1988). The children who were seen by the St. Louis HCHC health team were an average age of 4.9 years. They were accompanied by adults who indicated they had been without permanent shelter, on the average, for more than 4 months.

Among the top ten diagnoses were chronic health conditions such as asthma (4.5 %) and anemia (1.5%). The children were also commonly diagnosed as having upper respiratory infections (17.5%), skin problems, infestations and lice (7.3%). Incomplete immunizations were found in only 17.5% of the cases.

Developmental screening is also done by HCHC teams in St. Louis. Problems in growth and development were detected in 3% of the cases, but according to Krueger et al., without direct assessment, the sample cannot fully reflect the extent of problems in social and emotional development among homeless children (1988).

THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON CHILDREN

Traumatic situations which culminate in crisis and disruption especially followed by a ensuing period of homelessness produce significant stress for families. Reuben Hill's work on families and stress (Hill and Hansen, 1962) emphasizes that the severity of a crisis depends upon the meanings assigned to it, and the way it is defined and understood by those experiencing it. The same crisis event may actually have three different, yet co-existing definitions, the community's, the family's, and that of an impartial observer (Melson p.237). This seems to be true in many cases of homelessness. However, when children are affected the effects are especially important.

It is a common myth that children do not experience stress because they are not seen as responsible for most aspects of their lives; they have others to depend on. Children do, in fact, experience stress in their lives, and as Arent (1984) discusses, stress may result from the common or non-traumatic stressors which may include family problems and school problems. The more severe stressors would include divorce, death, abuse, violence and accidents. Although homelessness has not been discussed in the literature on children and stress, the evidence suggests that as a stressor, it may be quite severe.

In the general population, serious depressive disorders have been found to exist among children of all ages, even preschoolers. Almost always, the onset of depression occurs after a period of significant stress. All stresses, Arent says, have negative effects on the physical, emotional, social and psychological development of children. The effects are similar to the negative effects of stress on adults.

When children are under stress they experience a variety of serious problems (Chandler, 1982). A number of studies have shown that children who are unable to relieve their high levels of stress have become depressed, impulsive, aggressive, antisocial, self-destructive and irritable (Arent, 1984; Kuzen, 1982; Seyle, 1976; Tolman and Rose, 1985).

Childhood Stress and Behavior

Controversy in the measurement of childhood stress centers around the distinction between stressful conditions which are chronic, such as poverty, and major life events which produce stress. More recently, Wertlieb, Weigel and Feldstein's (1987) work suggests that "daily hassles" must also be considered in the debate. Their longitudinal study of 159 children and their mothers found that there was a highly significant positive relationship between stress and behavior symptoms in school age children.

"Daily hassles" as a measure of stress was included by Kanner, Coyne Schaefer and Lazarus (1981). They defined "daily hassles" as relatively minor annoyances that may or may not be associated with the readjustment to the experiences included on the more traditionally used major life event checklist. They found in their community sample of adults, that the stress index for "daily hassles" was a significant predictor of psychological distress, over and above the variance accounted for by the major life events index.

Research to establish a measure for "daily hassles" for children is still in the early stage of development (Kanner, Harrison, Wertlieb, 1985), but there is evidence that the level of stress experienced by the major caretaker is an important predictor of children's behavior problems (Belle, 1982; Bond & McMahon, 1984; Conger, McCarty et al., 1984). High levels of stress are experienced by homeless parents. With many parents reporting that their child (or children) is their major supportive relationship, children are likely feeling the stress confronting their parents.

Undesirable life events were the most strongly associated with behavior problems. It was also apparent that the stress of undesirable life events and the stress associated with "daily hassles" make independent, statistically significant contributions to the variation in behavior. Also, a strong inverse relationship was found between a family's social support and a child's behavior symptoms.

Social support may be a moderator of childhood and family stress. Sandler (1980) found in his sample of elementary school age children that the relationship between stress and behavior symptoms was higher among children with lower social support (i.e., those lacking a second parent and/or older sibling). Barrero (1981) studied 86 pregnant adolescents and found that those with good social support showed a smaller relationship between life changes and depressive symptoms.

Stressors and Symptoms in School Age Children

Stressors

Reviewing the significant stressors experienced during the school age years emphasizes the degree of stress faced by a homeless child. Commons stressors are magnified by homelessness which is an extreme crisis. In an exploratory study of stressors and symptoms of a non-representative sample of 60 school age children (Omizo et al., 1988), a number of stressors were cited. The stressors most frequently mentioned by elementary school children (in order of frequency) were family problems, feeling different, school related problems, discipline and general concerns and fears. Children in the intermediate school level mentioned general adolescent problems most frequently, followed by peer pressure, family problems, not feeling in control, and school related problems. High school students mentioned problems related to the future most frequently, followed by school-related problems, peer pressure, substance abuse, and family problems.

Symptoms

In a study of stress and behavior, school children mentioned a number of psychological symptoms including anxiety, depression and lack of motivation. They also reported physiological symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, diarrhea, constipation, hives, fatigue, hypertension and ulcers (Omizo et al., 1988). There were also numerous behavioral symptoms reported by both students and teachers, such as insomnia, interpersonal problems, maladaptive and inappropriate behaviors, fighting, acting out, overeating, smoking, substance abuse, lower achievements, running away, regressive behavior, aggression, use of denial and avoidance, loss of memory, self-destructive behaviors, truancy and delinquency. Emotional symptoms included fear of failure and success, overreactions or inappropriate reactions, irritability, low self-esteem, insecurity, feeling inferior and feeling guilty.

THE IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS ON SELF-CONCEPT

In Guiding Children's Social Development, Kostelnik et al. say that the goal of development is to enable children to adapt to the changing conditions of life and to make the most of their human, physical and psychological potential (p.5). Abraham Maslow (1943) termed this "self-actualization." Maslow maintained that the higher-order needs, such as "belongingness and esteem needs," can only be addressed after primary needs for safety, food, and shelter have been satisfactorily met with obvious implications for the homeless child, Kostelnik et al. point out that:

"a child who comes to school hungry or worried about being abused...may not be able to attend to a spelling or reading activity; a child who has not experienced feelings of secure ownership will not be inclined to share with others" (p.5).

The Stigma of Being Homeless

The stigma of being homeless may seriously affect a child's self-esteem. Children are especially sensitive about other people's attitudes about them and often adopt them as their own (Kostelnik et al., 1988). Through their interactions with others, children are continually gathering information about their personal value. Family members, teachers and other children serve as a mirror through which children see and begin to judge themselves in either a positive or a negative way. Obviously, a child's own temperament will influence personal interactions with others and is, therefore, also a contributor to the final image others have of the child and the image the child has of himself or herself.

The Danger of "Learned Helplessness"

Homeless children may develop a self-perception that they have no control over what happens to them. Failure to develop self-reliance that results from a child's repeated experiences of not being able to exert control over the near environment often results in "learned helplessness." In laboratory experiments, Fletcher (1974) showed how rats which were trained to avoid a shock by jumping from one-side of a box to another, soon gave up jumping when the shock was applied to both sides affording no way for the rat to avoid the shock. For a child, homelessness is clearly a powerful learning experience. Unfortunately, the "curriculum" is often a debilitating sense of helplessness.

The Influence on Self-Esteem

A child's self-concept is formed from the combination of self-perceptions about their own personal attributes, values and behaviors. A child's concept of self goes beyond what a child's notion of his or her physical make-up is; it is a "psychological construct in which the concepts of "me" and "not me" are defined" (Shaffer, 1985; Maccoby, 1980).

The concept of self emerges gradually and continues to evolve throughout the child's life. As Kostelnik et al. say, experience provides the context within which self-knowledge is generated, and as this self-knowledge is gained, children evaluate that knowledge, making positive and negative judgments about their self-worth (1988, pp.73,74). The evaluative component of the self is referred to as self-esteem (Openshaw, 1978).

Competence and self-worth are the two components of self-esteem. Homeless children experience potentially damaging assaults on these two components. According to Kostelnik et al.:

"Competence involves the belief that one has the wherewithal to accomplish tasks and influence events that affect one's life. The extent to which people value and like themselves is a measure of their self-worth... Youngsters whose self-esteem is high feel good about themselves....High self-esteem is related to positive life satisfaction and happiness. Low self-esteem, on the other hand, is associated with depression, anxiety and maladjustment. Children whose estimations of self-worth are negative, experience feelings of inadequacy and incompetence, and fear rejection....Theirs is not a balanced view, but one focused on failings....Because of these outcomes, low self-esteem detracts from one's quality of life and makes a happy existence difficult to achieve" (1988, p.74).

School Age Children and Self-Worth

According to Harter (1982), school age children begin to compartmentalize the notions they have about their own self-worth. They begin to make different evaluations of self in different realms - social, physical and intellectual. The weight that they give to both positive and negative evaluations in each area begins to contribute to an overall estimation of self-esteem. Some believe that by about eight or nine years of age children have developed this overall estimation of their value as a person and that this index, then, becomes their pervasive view throughout the rest of their lives (Coopersmith, 1967).

THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN

Homeless children are at risk for mental health problems because of their low socio-economic level and often their family structure. In addition, the environmental and psychological stresses they face as a result of being homeless would appear to greatly increase this risk.

Risk Factors

Kazdin (1989) notes that the rates of childhood dysfunction vary depending upon many factors such as age, sex, type of disorder, ethnic background and geographic region. Kazdin points out how the prevalence of disturbance is greater for boys than for girls and for youths in urban rather than rural areas. A higher rate of disturbances has also been noted among Black and Hispanic youth compared to Whites. The incidence is also higher for lower socio-economic levels and in single parent families (p.180).

Other environmental risk factors that have been associated with higher rates of mental health problems in children are parental psychopathology, physical or other maltreatment, a teenage parent, premature birth and low birthweight, parental divorce and serious childhood illness. It is much more common for several of these risk factors to occur together rather than in isolation (Tuma, 1989).

Tuma notes that these risk factors also have negative effects on the accomplishment of important developmental tasks such as toilet training for toddlers, developing intense peer relationships and becoming autonomous in adolescence. The potential for maladjustment must be considered when children's needs for mental health services are addressed, Tuma says:

"Even if these factors do not necessarily result in mental disorders that meet the diagnostic criteria of the revised Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III-R), they can cause maladjustment and place a child at risk for later and potentially more serious problems" (p.189).

Intervention Strategies

Due to the increased risk for mental health problems among homeless children, intervention programs should be considered. There are a variety of intervention programs. Tuma (1989) summarizes the most commonly used interventions for mental health treatment for children: psychotherapy, family therapy, group therapy, milieu therapy, crisis intervention and psychopharmacological treatment. The three broad categories of individual-treatment approaches are traditional therapy, behavior therapy and cognitive therapy (p.190).

Prevention Efforts

Efforts to prevent behavioral, social, emotional and academic difficulties in children have fallen into two categories, primary and secondary strategies. Primary prevention strategies are aimed at teachers and parents of high-risk children to reduce the incidence of new problems. Secondary prevention is geared toward alleviating an existing problem. Studies on the effectiveness of prevention programs suggest that effective interventions can be offered through any of several existing systems, notably the family, schools and health care programs (Tuma, 1989, p. 197).

Primary Prevention Efforts

Preschool program

The Head Start program is an example of primary prevention. Designed to provide enriched early childhood education for low-income children, Head Start programs provide many other services including health, nutrition, and social services. Parent and community involvement in the development and operation of the program have been documented as an effective part of Head Start.

Family support programs

Family support programs (FSPs) offer primary prevention through their recognition of the family as a principle source of mental health and adaptation among children. FSPs focus on strengths rather than deficits in families. They recognize parents' need for support for their roles. FSPs attempt to foster self-reliance. The emphasis on relationships between children and parents and between families and support systems in the community characterizes most FSPs. FSPs range from center-based programs resembling traditional mental health services to employer supported family programs such as flex-time and on-site day care (Tuma, 1989, p.197).

Family support programs in Missouri

There are numerous examples of Family Support Programs in Missouri. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has developed one such program for parents of children from birth through preschool known as "Parents-as-Teachers." Also, the University of Missouri College of Human Environmental Sciences Extension has adapted an FSP called "Family Times" (first developed by University of Wisconsin Extension) and promotes the program statewide.

Secondary Prevention Efforts

Preschool programs

Most secondary prevention efforts are aimed at training parents or school personnel to deal directly with a child's existing problem through the use of behavioral methods. The types of methods most effective with preschool children include ways for parents and teachers to reduce aggression and tantrums, increase eye contact, imitation and vocalization and enhancing children's personal behavior and language skills.

School-based programs

Most school-based programs focus on individual children in need of remediation for problems such as withdrawal, acting-out or academic deficiencies. Often teacher's aides are used to work directly with a child on individually determined goals on a regular basis.

ENVIRONMENTS AND CHILDREN

The physical environments in which children grow up, shape the material reality of children's daily lives, and also communicate messages about who they are, and who they can and should be in the future (Wolfe and Rivlin, 1978, p. 90). Children are especially sensitive to their immediate environment, and if that environment is a homeless shelter and the message the child hears is that it is not a "good place" to be, for example, the child may hear and internalize that they are not a "good person" for being in a shelter.

Adults control the material and social conditions of most children's lives, therefore, children have limited power to select alternatives. "Their understanding of the world, their sense of themselves and their competence, will largely reflect the relationship between the dominant values, and the extent to which they can realize those values within the reality of their lives", according to Wolfe and Rivlin (1978, p.90). A homeless child's sense of self, then, is influenced by the disparity between the "American Dream," to have a home, and the stigma of being homeless and poor.

The Meaning of "Place"

Proshansky and Fabian (1970) discuss the development of place identity in children as a complex social as well as cognitive process. They state:

"The child necessarily develops a sense of who he or she is - defined not only by an array of specific physical settings, but no less significantly, by the social definitions of those settings as expressed by the other people, the activities and the roles the child must exhibit in them" (p.37).

Proshansky and Fabian point out that there are some very real inconsistencies in the child's relationships to the physical environments of home, school and neighborhood. In the best of situations, these can lead to tensions and frustrations from the lack of continuity in the social rules governing behavior in the important places and spaces in day-to-day existence. For a homeless child who does not have the security of a home base, the incongruities confronted in the school and the community are extremely stressful.

Displacement from Home

Families

Displacement from a family's home means the loss of the domicile central to family functioning. Many hardships are likely to follow this loss. A homeless family lacks the major resource which serves to provide security against weather and criminals, a place to rest and sleep, to socialize, to perform basic routines of hygiene in privacy, a place to keep one's possessions, and a place to conveniently prepare food.

Being homeless is to be without one of the primary measures of status in our society (Jahiel, 1987). The loss of one's home also deprives one of an address, often essential to obtaining certain benefits and even to securing employment. Having one's own home is essential to the achievement of self-sufficiency expected of adults.

Children

Displacement from the family home deprives the child of a personal space for play, the earliest "work" of the child. Prescott (1978, p.84) notes that the home, with its provision of privacy, a personalized place of stability and the continuity of a home setting appeared to support play that had a particularly intimate, wholehearted, self-expressive quality. As Prescott observed, the home affords the incorporation of the diversity of objects found in a home into the child's play. The home also offers the privacy for a child to choose a space for him or herself or to accommodate best friends with few demands or rules about sharing with a group.

A child whose family is homeless, experiences displacement from the personal environment used by the child for a number of developmental purposes:

- 1) relationship with others,
 - 2) social networks,
 - 3) statement of self-identity,
 - 4) a place of privacy and refuge,
 - 5) a place of stability and continuity,
 - 6) a personalized place,
 - 7) a locus of everyday behaviors and base of activity,
 - 8) a childhood home and place of upbringing and
 - 9) shelter and physical structure
- (Hayward, 1978, in Prescott 1978, p.84).

Overcrowding and Lack of Privacy

The Census defines a household as overcrowded if the number of persons exceeds the number of rooms. The majority of homeless families have lived in this type of situation with family or friends prior to entering a shelter. They move from one crowded place to another when they move into most shelters. Shelters also have very little privacy available to either adults or children.

In considering the research on privacy and children, Wolfe (1978) states, "It may be that in our culture, the high value or status accorded to the sole possession of a place means that it becomes a symbol for self-worthiness, especially in a setting where other signs of self-worth are absent" (in Altman and Wohlwill, p.228). Therefore, privacy may be quite important to a homeless person rather than an unimportant aspect of shelter.

Research has shown that crowding has numerous adverse effects on people living in high density environments. However, it is crowding at the micro-level (persons per room) rather than crowding at the macro-level (person per acre), that produces social pathology. Laboratory studies of crowding have produced results indicating that crowding has negative effects on both adults and children. Booth and Johnson (1975)

found a small adverse effect on the physical and intellectual development of children in crowded situations; children tended to be somewhat small for their age and slightly behind in school. There is some evidence that younger children appear to be more reactive to crowding than older children (Loo, 1978).

Murray (1974) found that high levels of within-household density resulted in children being more aggressive in school settings. Two other experiments by Rodin (1976), show that children living under severely crowded conditions suffer motivational deficits and consequently are not as likely to exert control over situations affecting them when given the opportunity to do so.

In her book, Family and Environment, An Ecosystem Approach, Gail Melson points out that privacy serves the function of "safeguarding personal autonomy, making possible a sense of self-identity and self-worth."

III. METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

Finding and counting the homeless is very difficult. The problems inherent in counting the homeless are apparent from both the literature and the approaches other states have taken to develop state plans for the education of homeless children. Given the resources and time constraints of the current project, a combination of methods was selected that would provide investigators with both quantitative and qualitative data.

BACKGROUND

The Institute of Medicine's Committee on Health Care for Homeless People notes in its recent and well-publicized report that key to the study was a search of unpublished reports and a supplemental series of ten papers commissioned by "experts on subjects of concern." Two of these papers provide the most current information available regarding methods for counting the homeless: 1) "A Critique of the Methodologies of Counting the Homeless," by Charles Cowan, William Breakey, and Pamela Fischer; and, 2) "Rural Homelessness," by Lawrence Patton.

As Patton notes, project investigators realized that the basis of any research of homelessness in Missouri must begin with an understanding of diversity in Missouri. In many ways the state is a microcosm of the nation. It has the sunbelt to the south and the cornbelt to the north. In the bootheel are visages of the deep south, while the metropolitan areas of St. Louis and Kansas City represent the east and the west. And while 76 percent of Missouri's population is considered urban, over 900 communities have under 2500 population. This diversity presented special problems to researchers. In a community experiencing the farm crisis, those without homes are historically "taken care of" by friends and relatives and as such may not be perceived as "homeless" which definition is reserved for transients or others not indigenous to the area. In metro areas the problem is much more visible, but the problems of duplication and estimate inflation become major issues for the research design.

Cowan et al. review problems in enumerating the homeless of any geographical area:

"Counting the homeless population is extremely difficult because of the lack of a clear definition of homelessness, the mobility of the population, and the cyclical nature of homelessness for many individuals. In addition, homeless people are often reluctant to be interviewed, and many of them remain invisible even to the most diligent of researchers" (p. 170).

Although in the final analysis, these experts conclude that "there is no uniform method of enumerating the homeless," they proceed to describe three approaches that have been used: 1) indirect estimation, 2) single- or multiple count censuses, and 3)

capture-recapture studies. We will not go into a discussion of the latter since its sophistication was beyond the scope of this project.

Indirect Method

The indirect method of estimation involves eliciting information from knowledgeable sources, or key informants, about the number of homeless people in an area or the number receiving services, including tallies of the number of people using shelters and other services and estimates of the number of people turned away or otherwise not receiving services. In this type of study, a standard criteria for defining "homeless" must be used for each key informant, and key informants must be exhaustively surveyed. Because different agencies or groups provide services for the same set of people, an unduplicated count is extremely difficult and requires detailed knowledge of the area and the services under study. The latter deems this method of particular utility in rural areas where locally-based service providers have extensive information about local ways and local strengths and resources, especially about informal resources that are available via natural helping networks. Local workers usually know each other by first name and their children probably share the same school.

A great advantage of indirect estimation is that it is the most economical method. Data collection in this type of study can be done by telephone or by letter with staff in service agencies and local government bureaus, again rendering it of particular usefulness for a statewide effort. In addition, publications and mailing lists that can be used as a base for the counts are often available from the agencies and bureaus.

The major disadvantage of this method is its tendency to produce inflated estimates due to duplication. The necessity of reliance on the advice of key informants whose perceptions of the size and nature of the homeless population are biased by their own particular set of experiences and who may be unaware of the extent of the overlap in service utilization may also badly skew that population estimate, especially in urban areas.

Single Contact Censuses

The single contact census is a technique that has been used effectively in many cities to make estimates of the size of their homeless populations. The advantages of a single-contact census are twofold; it provides for direct contact, even if only by observation so that the possibility of counting individuals more than once is reduced, and there is greater assurance that the people contacted fit the study's definition.

PROCESS

Enumeration of Providers and Key Informants

Shelters of Homeless Children

In order to develop an exhaustive list of shelter providers throughout the state, the most recent Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan (CHAP) for Missouri was used. The CHAP listed all emergency homeless shelters in the state as of September, 1987. This list was then checked against the Kansas City Homeless Directory, 1988 (published by United Services of Greater Kansas City). For the St. Louis area investigators consulted the Survey of St. Louis Area Shelters (Alice Johnson, 1988) and the most recent list through October, 1988 from the City of St. Louis Office of Family Services. In addition, homeless coordinators from each Community Action Agency (CAP) were asked to verify the shelters on this list and/or suggest other shelters in their area not on the list.

There have been at least two shelters open after this survey was done; one in Kirksville (Violence Intervention Services) and one in West Plains (the Good Samaritan). Although they do serve children, they were not surveyed because they were not open on November 9, 1988.

Community Action Agencies

A list of 19 regional community action programs in the state was obtained from the Central Missouri Human Development Corporation (HDC). The Central Missouri Regional Office also provided a list of their eight county offices stating that in their case each county office should be surveyed separately since the regional office did not have regional summary data. In total, a list of 27 CAP agencies was compiled.

The regional agencies were telephoned to determine if they could provide information about homeless children and families served by their agency during a twelve month period ending in October, 1988. The Central Missouri HDC homeless coordinator alerted the county offices in the region that their participation was needed in the survey.

The questionnaire and a CAP Agency Census form was sent to each of the 27 CAP agencies. The instructions on the questionnaire indicated that programs not providing overnight shelter to children were to skip the question regarding the number of children served on November 9, 1988. Instructions on the CAP Census form asked for information about the number of children served for the year through October, 1988.

An original list of 131 shelters and CAP agencies was enumerated by the above process. Of these, 28 were deleted because they served men only, 3 were untraceable, 4 were no longer in service, and 9 were duplications. During the survey process an

additional 7 shelters were identified and added to the list for a final number (N) of 94 -- 67 shelters and 27 CAP agencies.

School District Superintendents

The list of elementary and secondary school district superintendents was obtained from the state education department. Due to documentation problems the initial mailing in December 1988 was not sent to elementary superintendents. A second mailing to all elementary superintendents and superintendents who had received the first mailing but had not yet responded was issued in January 1989 and follow-up continued until February 28. Elementary building principals in selected major and minor metropolitan areas were also initially targeted for survey. However, it was determined that the building principals were not an appropriate target for the survey and this effort was aborted.

Divisions of Family and Youth Services, and County Sheriffs

During several field visits it was suggested to project staff that local law enforcement officials and social service agencies might be useful key informants regarding homeless populations. Therefore, as a second phase of the project, mailing lists of Family Services County Administrators and County Sheriffs were obtained from their respective state representatives in Jefferson City. A one page survey was developed based on the knowledge gained from the shelter survey and on-site visits. A copy was sent to each county administrator. A follow-up postcard was issued to nonrespondents approximately 3 weeks after the initial mailing.

Development of Survey Instruments

Shelter Survey

The design of the shelter survey instrument was based upon extensive survey work by project staff, background work with this particular research problem, and the requirements of the McKinney Act. The shelter survey instrument is divided into 3 major sections: 1) a description of the shelter, 2) a count of the homeless, and 3) opinions regarding barriers to education.

Several forms used by other states (Iowa, Montana) were used to help design the shelter questionnaire. Johnson's (1988) Survey of St. Louis Area Shelters was relied on heavily for questions regarding shelter facilities. November 9th was chosen for the count because that date was only a few days before the shelters received the questionnaire, thus making recall easier if records were not available.

Fourteen barriers to education were listed by the State of Montana on their "Educational Needs Assessment of Homeless Children for Montana." Items were constructed to assess these barriers as well as others that seemed apparent from

consulting the literature on the effects of homelessness on children. Question 17 - sections I, III, IV and V covered all the possible barriers that seemed relevant.

Reference was made to the Non-regulatory Guidance, Title VII, Subtitle B of the Stewart B. McKinney Act (Public Law 100-77) for items specifically mentioned that must be addressed in the State Plan. The items which could be barriers to education (residency requirements, problems with school and immunization records, enrollment procedures, transportation problems) are among the items covered by Question 17 - Section II.

The McKinney Act also requires that state plans address the difficulties in identifying the special needs of homeless children. Question 19 presented seven possible ways to identify the special needs of children. The eighth was "Other" -- an open-ended response option. These questions were designed to determine how shelter staff identify the needs of children they serve. Question 22 on services needed was designed as a check against responses to barrier questions.

CAP Agency Census Form

The Community Action Agencies are often the first point of contact for a person who is homeless, especially in rural areas. A census form was developed to try to attain an annual estimate of the number of homeless children these agencies served. The CAPS were also asked to indicate the variety of possible situations in which the families were found and to provide data by age, sex, race, and school attendance.

School District Survey

Washington State's "Superintendent of Public Instruction Survey" was used to help determine key issue areas to be covered in the survey for "School Administrators." The questions were developed using an "open-ended" format so that administrators could express their opinions regarding homelessness in their own words. Respondents were also invited to attach any supporting documents regarding their district's policies about the education of homeless children. The cover page of the questionnaire explained the survey's purpose and provided the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act definition of homelessness so that respondents would have a shared frame of reference regarding homelessness. A memorandum from the Missouri Commissioner of Education was sent to Missouri Superintendents prior to the survey to stress the importance of their participation and was also referenced in the cover letter.

Key Informant Survey

A one-page survey was developed for use with the Divisions of Youth and Family Services and the County Sheriffs primarily based on experience with the shelters. The Stewart B. McKinney definition of homelessness was provided to insure a common frame of reference with other respondents. A postcard was used as follow-up.

Pretesting

The shelter survey instrument was pretested among approximately 12 academicians and practitioners in and around the University of Missouri-Columbia Campus. This testing was done in a series of waves to allow for incorporation of each suggestion before exposure to a new audience. The remaining instruments incorporated many items from the basic survey but were not separately pretested.

Response Rates

Shelters

Forty-seven of the shelters returned the survey (70%) and an additional 12 were telephoned to obtain the "count" information. In total the data in this analysis represents information obtained from 88 percent of the shelters identified as serving children in Missouri.

Complete responses were obtained from 19 CAP agencies, that is, these agencies returned the census form and the survey. One agency returned the census form only, 4 returned the survey only, and 3 did not respond. To avoid any possible duplicate reporting, the CAP surveys are not used in the determination of the homeless count or in the shelter description part of this report. These respondents are, however, included in the analysis of barriers to education. Due to problems with incomplete data and inconsistent reporting across agencies, the information from the census form could not be analyzed.

School District Superintendents

A total of 310 of the 545 surveys mailed out were returned by school personnel for a final response rate of 57 percent. Of these 310 respondents, 37 districts were aware of identified homeless children in their respective districts. Seven superintendents submitted documents regarding district policies on homeless children. These are presented in an unattached document -- Appendix D.

Division of Family Services

Of the 115 survey instruments mailed out, a total of 56 were returned for a response rate of 49 percent. Of these 56 respondents, 3 provided no data, 29 estimated that there were zero homeless children in their area in 1988, and the remaining 24 provided some estimate of the number of homeless children in their county.

Division of Youth Services and County Sheriffs

Despite follow-up, only two of the 5 regional youth services offices and 21 county sheriffs returned surveys. This is less than a 20 percent response rate. We believe this data is unreliable, and, therefore, it has not been reported.

IV. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

This section of the report reviews the quantitative findings from the shelter, CAP agency, school superintendent, and Division of Family Services questionnaires. The shelter responses were used to provide descriptive information about the shelters and unduplicated estimates of the number of homeless children on November 9, 1988. Both the CAP agency data and the shelter data were used to assess the range of opinion about educational barriers. Finally, school district and DFS perceptions of the number of homeless children encountered annually are reviewed.

A total of 593 children were served on November 9, 1988 by the 59 Missouri shelters who responded with census counts. About half (46%) were school age children. For several reasons this is a conservative estimate of the number of homeless children. First, several other shelters who served children on the 9th did not respond to the census. Second, a third of the shelters reported that the 9th was a somewhat slow night. Third, by restricting the count to only those children actually in recognized shelters we have intentionally excluded many other homeless children who were in other kinds of places. In other words, there are at least 600 homeless children in Missouri each night. There may be many more, but at the present time there are certainly no fewer than that.

If November 9th was a fairly typical night, and if we apply the average length of stay information the shelters provided, we are able to project an annualized number of children served by the shelters. Depending on what assumptions are made for missing data, the annualized estimates from the shelters range from approximately 6,500 to 8,000 children served. This is a conservative estimate since one-third of the respondents indicated that, on that night, their census was lower than average.

Because of the many factors previously discussed, a precise count of the homeless is impossible. Given the uneven distribution of homelessness across the state, and the reluctance on the part of the homeless to inform some authorities of their status, it is not surprising that there are divergent perceptions of the problem. For example, only a small percent of the superintendents responding to the school district questionnaire indicated that they had encountered children they perceived to be homeless. Among those responding with a count, the total number of homeless children school superintendents said to be enrolled during the 1987-88 school year was less than the number of school aged children known to have been in Missouri shelters on a single night in November.

Thus, this report has attempted to construct a simple, narrowly defined count of homeless children about which there could be little disagreement. After all, exactly how many children are homeless is less important than understanding what we can do to help those that are and might become homeless. We turn now to a discussion of the shelters, the counts and the perceived educational barriers encountered.

SHELTERS

Shelter Clientele

Shelter providers were first asked to give a description of the type of clientele they served. This provided a check for respondent appropriateness, that is, if a shelter indicated they did not serve children they were dropped from the sample. In order to meet the criteria for remaining in the sample, an agency must respond that they serve families with children (either age group) or minors on their own. Of the 47 meeting this criteria, 26 also serve men, 39 serve women, 37 serve families with children under 12 years and 31 serve families with children 12 to 18 years old. Only 10 of the 47 shelters responding to our survey serve unaccompanied minors.

TABLE 1.

People Served:	Number of Shelters	Percent of Shelters
Men	26	55%
Women	39	83%
Families w/children (0-11 yrs.)	37	79%
Families w/youth (12-18 yrs.)	31	66%
Unaccompanied Minors	10	21%

Programs Provided

A total of 47 providers of shelter to homeless children in Missouri responded to the survey questions regarding program description. Respondents were asked to indicate the types of programs they provided. These categories were not mutually exclusive and respondents could check as many types of programs as applied. Thirty-one (66%) provide 24-hour shelter, 25 provide referral services, 16 provide congregate meal sites, 14 have a transitional housing program, 12 provide medical services, 11 indicated they provide overnight shelter only, and 3 provide day shelter only.

TABLE 2.

<u>Services</u>	Number of Shelters	Percent of Shelters
24-hour shelter	31	66%
Referral Center	25	53%
Congregate meal site	16	34%
Transitional housing program	14	30%
Medical services	12	26%
Overnight shelter only	11	23%
Day shelter only	3	6%

Types of Services Offered

Respondents were also asked to describe the types of services they offered specific groups of clients. The services offered by shelters is illustrated in Table 3 on the following page. Only about one-third indicated that they are able to provide assessment for children under 12 years of age or for men. Two out of five provide this service for youth, women, and families. As would be expected, the vast majority of the shelters in this sample provide shelter to children and youth as well as women and families. About one-third also provide shelter to men. About the same proportions apply to providers of meals. Case management services are more likely to be provided for youth, women, and families, but about one-third also indicate they provide this service to children or to men. Less than one-third of the shelters indicated that they had the resources to provide medical or psychological services to any of the client types. Employment counseling is provided to women in 40 percent of the shelters, to men in 30 percent, to families in 34 percent and to youth in 23 percent. Housing placement services for women are available in 36 percent of the shelters, for families in 34 percent, for men and youth in 23 percent, and for children in 15 percent. Daycare services for children are provided in only one-fourth of the shelters. Transportation for children and youth is available at more than one-third of the shelters and for women at more than 43 percent.

TABLE 3.

CLIENTS	SERVICES											
	assessment	shelter	meals	case management: advocacy, arrangements, monitoring, follow-up etc.	medical services	psychological counseling	employment counseling	housing placement services	mail-message services	day care services	in-between meal snack	transportation
children (0-11yrs.)	14	32	28	16	11	7	2	7	11	12	20	16
youth (12-18 yrs.)	19	35	31	23	14	14	11	11	13	7	19	18
women	18	32	30	24	13	15	19	17	19	7	16	20
men	13	18	17	15	8	11	16	11	10	3	4	10
families	19	26	24	19	11	12	14	16	15	9	14	15

Respondent Characteristics

As a part of the survey, respondents were asked to describe themselves. The majority (83%) are paid staff, female (75%), white (83%), and have a college education. On average respondents have been working with the homeless for 5 years and in social services for 9 years.

TABLE 4.

Paid Staff 83%	Volunteer 17%
Female 75%	Male 25%
Black 17%	White 83%

Mean years working with the homeless 5

Mean years working in social services 9

Mean years of education 16.2

Facility Characteristics

The size of the 47 shelters in this sample is quite diverse ranging from 1-2 room facilities to over 20 rooms. The greatest number fall into the larger category representative of the urban concentrations of the homeless. Only 3 percent report having only 1 toilet with the average number being 7 bathrooms. Eighteen percent do not have private shower or bath facilities, and 8 percent do not have laundry machines. Thirty-nine shelters indicated the number of people for which they have space. The average was 35 persons with a range of 3 to 226.

TABLE 5.

Number of rooms for resident use - excluding office space:

1-2	5%
3-4	10%
5-6	13%
7-8	13%
9-10	13%
11-12	13%
13-14	3%
15-19	5%
20 or more	26%

Percent with more than one toilet	97%
Mean number of bathrooms	7
Percent with private showers or bath	82%
Percent with laundry machines	92%
Mean number of persons in shelter	39

Special Facilities for Children

Of the 47 shelters responding to this survey, only one-fourth report no special facilities for children. About 56 percent have toys and high chairs for meals. About 46 percent have a playground and provide in-between meal snacks. Thirty-one percent have nap areas and provide an infant formula preparation and storage area. Approximately 27 percent report that they provide "potty" chairs and diapering areas.

TABLE 6.

<u>Special Facility</u>	<u>Number of Shelters</u>
Toys	27
High chairs	26
Snacks	22
Playground	21
Formula area	15
Nap area	14
"Potty" chairs	13
Diapering area	12

Identification of Special Needs

Three out of four respondents report that the most often used method of identifying a child's possible special needs is by observation of the child. The second most frequently used method is parent interview (71%). In addition, 55 percent also report talking to the child or consulting the referral source (40%) as ways to determine special needs.

TABLE 7.

When a child first comes to you for help, how do you identify his or her special needs?

	<u>Percent Distribution</u>					
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't Know
Interview Parent	71	14	10	-	2	2
Talk to Child	55	23	18	-	-	5
Observe Child	74	13	10	-	-	3
Talk to Older Siblings	22	32	32	8	3	3
Consult Referral Source	40	33	13	8	3	5
Administer Special tests	16	8	-	19	49	8
Examine medically	13	16	8	11	47	5

Count of Homeless Children

Number of Homeless Children November 9, 1988

A total of 593 children were reportedly served by this sample of shelters on November 9, 1988. A large proportion (42%) of these children were under 5 years of age -- 4 out of 5 were under age 12. Over half (58%) were school age children. This is a conservative estimate of the number of homeless children. It counts only children who were actually sleeping in a shelter that night. Further, 12 percent of the shelters serving children in Missouri did not respond to the questionnaire. Excluded from this count were children in any other situations. For example, many siblings of the counted children are left with family members or dropped off at friends or neighbors houses on

the way to the shelters. The count of 593 sets the lower limit to numerical estimates of homeless children in the state. If November 9th was typical (see Table 11) at least this many Missouri children sleep in shelters every night.

TABLE 8.

Ages	Total Number	Percent
0-4	248	41.82%
5	77	12.98%
6-11	167	28.16%
12-14	52	8.77%
15	20	3.37%
16-18	29	4.98%
Total School Age	345	58.18%
Total All Ages	593	100.00%

Homeless Children by Race by Age

Shelter respondents described 516 of these children by race. Fifty-eight percent were black, 40 percent were white and 2 percent were of other races. Two out of every 3 preschool children sheltered on the night in question were black.

TABLE 9.

Ages	Black	White	Other
0-4	145	75	0
5	32	8	3
6-11	85	71	2
12-14	17	25	2
15	7	11	0
16-18	16	17	0
Total	302	207	7

Homeless Children Educational Status

Shelter personnel report that approximately one-fifth (17.83%) of the school age children in their shelter on November 9, 1988 were not in school. The likelihood of not being in school increases with age. Whereas only 7 percent of those age 6-11 years or age 12 to 14 years were not attending school, these percentages jump to over 30 and 40 for high schoolers.

TABLE 10.

Ages	In School	Not In School	Pct. Not In School
5	26	16	38.10%
6-11	120	9	6.98%
12-14	38	3	7.32%
15	11	5	31.25%
16-18	17	13	43.33%
Total	212	46	17.83%

How Typical Was Wednesday November 9th

About 2 in 3 respondents characterize the number of children served on this night as average. On the other hand, 1 in 3 report that this number of children is fewer than average for their shelters on a typical night. Thus, the November 9th count can be seen as somewhat low relative to a typical night at the shelters.

TABLE 11.

	Number	Percent
More than average	3	6.38%
Average number of people	29	61.70%
Fewer people than average	15	31.91%

Average Length of Stay

In order to determine the "turnover rate" in shelters, respondents were asked, on average, how long most people usually stay at their facility. The distribution of children by the average length of stay of shelters is shown in Table 12. Forty-eight percent of the children were at shelters that reported stays of a month or less. By then estimating a turnover period based on the average length of stay reported by each shelter and multiplying by the total number of children served on November 9, 1988, it is possible to estimate the annual number of homeless children in Missouri. Shelters representing 95 children did not provide length of stay information. These children were assigned the modal length of stay of 1 month. In total, this estimate is approximately 6,382. According to the distribution by age given earlier (see Table 8) this would represent approximately 3,700 school age children in shelters. It is important to note, however, that this estimate does not include any count of the number of children living in other situations, which field interviews information indicates is predominantly school age.

TABLE 12.

Length of Stay	Number of Children by LOS	Turnover Period	Annual Estimate of Children Served
Unknown	95	12	1,140
One week	18	52	936
1 to 2 weeks	26	26	676
1 month	241	12	2,892
3 months	156	4	624
6 months	57	2	114
		Total:	6,382
		School Age:	3,700

Barriers to Education

Both the shelters and the CAP agencies (N=59) were asked to respond to this portion of the survey. Respondents were asked to "rate" barriers to education from "Never a Barrier" to "Always a Barrier". The "best" possible score for any particular item would be 1, in which case respondents never perceive an item to be a barrier to a homeless child's education. The following tables (Tables 13-17) list the mean scores of

each set of barriers described in the survey in rank order from most often perceived to least often perceived as a barrier.

Barriers receiving mean scores of greater than 4.00

The barriers which respondents felt were the most severe were "Uncertainty about the future", "Lack of money", "Lack of permanent housing", "Frequent moves", "Low self-esteem", and "Family instability".

TABLE 13.

Uncertainty about the future	4.29
Lack of money	4.24
Lack of permanent housing	4.16
Frequent moves	4.11
Low self-esteem	4.09
Family instability	4.08

Barriers receiving means scores between 3.50 and 4.00

Sixteen of the barrier items received mean scores that were 1.00 to 1.50 above the midpoint range of the scale. The top two in this category were "Emotional trauma" and "Lack of self-confidence." Other psychologically or emotionally oriented barriers in this group are related to depression, emotional and behavior problems, family violence, and just not feeling safe or happy. More concrete items involved lack of medical care or transportation, personal hygiene and lack of clothing for school, cost of school supplies, or parent job-seeking. Barriers directly related to the schooling process included poor basic skills and falling behind grade level.

TABLE 14.

Emotional trauma	3.89
Lack of self-confidence	3.86
Poor reading, writing and math skills	3.75
Depression	3.68

Not feeling safe	3.67
Lack of medical care	3.64
Falling behind grade level	3.63
Personal hygiene	3.63
Lack of transportation	3.59
Lack of clothing for school	3.59
Family violence or abuse	3.58
Child is unhappy	3.57
Emotional problems	3.56
Parents looking for a job	3.53
Behavior problems	3.52
Cost of school supplies	3.50

Barriers receiving mean scores between 3.00 and 3.50

An additional 23 barrier items received mean scores of half to one point above the scale midpoint. Topping this list were "Developmental delays", "Lack of sleep," "Parents don't have enough time for children," "Problems getting immunization records," and "Hunger." Many "system" problems surfaced in this group as well. In addition to problems getting immunization records, were transferring between schools, getting school records, residency requirements, attendance rules, and problems with obtaining public assistance. Money for transportation and other transportation problems were also included at this level. Other more subtle issues are also grouped at this level of importance such as children not trusting people, and child disliking or fearing school. Illiteracy of parents, parents keeping children out of school, caring for siblings, substance abuse, mental health problems, and learning disabilities are also grouped here.

TABLE 15.

Developmental delays	3.47
Lack of sleep	3.46

Parents don't have enough time for their kids	3.43
Problems getting immunization records	3.43
Hunger	3.42
Having to care for siblings	3.39
Other transportation difficulties	3.38
Problems transferring between schools	3.38
Child doesn't trust people	3.35
Problems getting school records	3.32
Substance abuse	3.28
Money for transport	3.25
Attendance rules	3.24
Learning disability	3.24
Mental health problems	3.24
Residency requirements	3.21
Child dislikes school	3.20
Illiteracy of parents	3.19
Problems obtaining public assistance	3.18
Fear of school	3.17
Attitudes of classmates	3.11
Parents keep children out of school	3.07

Barriers receiving means scores under 3.00

The following barrier items received the lowest rankings by the shelter respondents. That is, they are generally not seen as barriers to education. Chronic

illness or physical handicap are not seen as extremely major problems in terms of access to education. Respondents also appear to believe that by and large parents do believe that education is important. Shelter respondents indicate in Table 18, that one of the top educational needs of homeless children is greater sensitivity of teachers. However, as indicated here, they do not perceive an attitude problem, but rather one of degree of awareness. The lowest mean score was given to English as a second language -- this probably reflects the racial/ethnic distribution of children in Missouri rather than the magnitude of this problem.

TABLE 16.

Chronic illness of child	2.98
Chronic illness of parent	2.96
Parents don't believe education is important	2.91
Attitudes of school personnel	2.88
Physical handicap	2.60
English is a second language	2.29

Barriers to education in their away-from school environment.

Shelter providers and CAP agency respondents feel that lack of privacy is the worst barrier to education in a child's away-from school environment. Three other interrelated barriers (lack of help with homework or space to study and too much noise) --were also considered high priority by respondents each receiving mean scores of greater than 3.5 on the 1 to 5 scale. All barriers in this section were given greater than the mid-point means of 2.5 by a considerable margin.

TABLE 17.

Lack of privacy	3.77
Lack of help with homework	3.56
Lack of space to study	3.55
Too much noise	3.54
Lack of homework materials	

(i.e., books, paper, pencils)	3.44
Shelter is far from friends	3.33
Shelter is far from school	2.91
Access to a telephone	2.79

Educational services needed by the children served.

The four educational services shelter providers feel are needed most often by the children they serve in rank order were: access to Headstart, individual counseling, study materials, and greater teacher sensitivity. Also receiving mean scores of above 3.5 were adult literacy education for parents and help with homework.

TABLE 18.

Access to "Headstart"	3.84
Individual child counseling	3.78
Study materials such as books, paper, pencils, etc., in shelters	3.70
Greater sensitivity on the part of teachers	3.70
Adult literacy education for parents	3.56
Help with homework	3.55
Daycare so children are not responsible for siblings	3.47
Designated advocate/ombudsman on the school district's staff	3.45
Special transportation	3.38
Special tutoring in shelters	3.35
Easier way to get school records	3.27
"Alternative" learning center	3.17
Removal of residency requirements	2.86

School District Superintendents

The majority of the questions asked of district superintendents were of a qualitative nature, and therefore, those results are presented in Section VI of this report. Presented here is a synopsis of the quantifiable data.

Of the 310 returned surveys, 22 respondents indicated they did not know if there were any homeless children in their district or that the data was not easily accessible, and an additional 37 respondents did not answer the question. Of the remaining 251, 85 percent (214) indicated that they were not aware of any homeless children in their districts, and 37 provided numbers of children.

Of the 37 school districts providing numbers of homeless children served by a district during the 1987-88 school year, a total of 173 children were reported. For the period September 1988 through November 31, 1988 the total was 170. A specific breakdown of this information is provided in the table below.

TABLE 19.

Grade Level	1987-88 School Year	September 1988- November 31, 1988
Preschool	3	5
K-6th	55	52
7th-9th	45	46
10th-12th	70	67

Districts were also asked if a contact person for homeless children was available in their respective districts. Seventy-seven percent of the districts responding to this question indicated no such person had been designated, 23 percent indicated there was, and 56 districts did not respond to the question.

Division of Family Services

Twenty-four Division of Family Services respondents estimated that a total of 2,321 children were homeless in their areas at some time in 1988. The average estimate was 97 with a range of 1 to 1,700 children. Respondents estimate that on the average, 52 percent of these children are female, 30 percent are under age 6, 26 percent are age 6-11 years, and 39 percent are between 12 and 17 years of age. Approximately a fourth are estimated to be alone and on their own and two-thirds to three-fourths are with adult family members. Respondents estimate that 2 out of 5 of these children do not attend school regularly.

V. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SHELTER INTERVIEWS

OVERVIEW

Our analysis of field interview data suggests that there are five major issues regarding the education of homeless children which parents, shelter staff and school personnel find salient: schooling and homeless children; behavioral adjustments impacting on children's school performance; school attendance; shelter learning environments and factors affecting children's health and safety. In this section we review and summarize our observations on these items.

Selected anecdotal evidence gathered in the course of interviews is included at the end of this section. These are direct quotes from homeless children, parents and shelter staff. Also included are pertinent written remarks included in the "additional comments" section by respondents who completed the shelter survey form (a mailed questionnaire). Appendix C is a large, confidential, unattached listing of all qualitative field notes from which this survey analysis was prepared.

FIELD INTERVIEWS

Nearly 120 field interviews were conducted in urban and rural areas of Missouri regarding the educational needs of homeless children. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain first hand information from homeless parents, shelter staff and school personnel concerning their experiences regarding educational barriers faced by children who are homeless. The field interviews were designed to complement the information obtained in the quantitative surveys.

Interviews were conducted in St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield, Joplin, Columbia, Hayti, Poplar Bluff and St. Clair. Altogether 41 parents of 118 children were interviewed. With the exception of one, these parents were all residents of shelters at the time of the interviews. Most of the parent interviews were conducted in small groups, however, some were interviewed individually. Frequently children were present during parent interviews. At the invitation of a large urban shelter, one researcher attended one session of a weekly group discussion in which eight children, ages 9 to 19, were present. The group met under the direction of the developmental specialist on the shelter staff.

Shelter personnel were interviewed at each of the shelters visited. In all, 32 shelter personnel discussed their perspective on educational barriers facing the children in their shelters.

School personnel were interviewed in almost every city where shelters were visited (Columbia was the only exception). In all, 44 school personnel were interviewed. School social workers and home-school coordinators in St. Louis, Kansas City and

Springfield were interviewed as well as representatives from each superintendent's office. Superintendents from the other communities as well as several building principals were also interviewed.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

The interviews took place during November and December of 1988. All of the parents were interviewed while residing in a homeless shelter. The one exception was a mother who had been homeless during the preceding month but had located permanent housing. These parents all had at least one school age child, usually they had several.

Most of the information obtained through interviews related to parental concern for their children's education. However, many of these parents offered additional elaboration of their experience by providing anecdotal information about their family situation.

For many, this was their first homeless experience, but others had been homeless at another time prior to this. Some of the families had been in several shelters, while others had been in only one shelter.

Family experience

Poverty was a common experience of most of the families. Four of the families were intact with two parents together, the other families were headed by a single woman. Several of the two parent families had working members, but most of the parents appeared to be unemployed.

Violence was reported by many of the single mothers as a major reason why they were homeless. The need to flee an abusive mate forced a number of them to leave their homes very quickly, taking only a few belongings with them.

Crises events such as fire and eviction, condemnation of the housing unit, and illness of a child resulting in a parent's dismissal from employment were all mentioned as reasons why the family was homeless.

Family separation appeared to be a frequent occurrence. A large number of parents had left one or more of their older children (10 years and older) with family or friends instead of bringing them to the shelter. In addition, many parents mentioned that the family had been living with other family or friends prior to coming to the shelter, but the tension of living in crowded quarters was too stressful on everyone. As a result, many times the family was asked to leave.

Significant losses experienced by the families were mentioned by many parents. In addition to their loss of housing, many said they missed their old neighborhood and wanted to try and find housing there again. Others said their children missed their friends and playmates. Many parents indicated that their children missed their former school.

Individual and family strengths were frequently noted even under these circumstances. Positive attitudes of hope and determination were expressed by many of the parents. Emotional support from extended family members was indicated by some of the mothers, even though housing was not available from them. Though only a few of the parents seemed to have any education beyond high school, most of the parents expressed a high value for their children's education.

Shelter experience

A period of stabilization usually takes place after a family moves into a shelter. Once the family has had a few days to rest and reorient themselves, they are able to begin to make some plans about what they can do to improve their situation.

Time limits for shelter residence seemed to be from one to three months. Parents indicated that as the end of their time limit approached they felt a great amount of stress. Shelter staff often indicated that the time limits could be extended in individual cases.

Rules, regulations and expectations are all part of shelter life. Most of the time they seem to require some adjustments in habits and behaviors. Mothers often said that it was difficult for their children to understand all of the new rules.

Many of the shelters require that parents stay with their children at all times. Safety concerns are usually the reason for this rule. School age children are required by most shelters to be enrolled in school.

A number of shelters require that the adults enter into a contract while they are residents, promising to work on issues of self-development, employment, education or training and obtaining housing. Some shelters require participation in religious ceremony or scriptural studies.

Group living conditions are common to most shelters and are usually very uncommon to families who have been accustomed to private living in their own homes. For many families the adjustment to living in a more public space requires a great deal of adjustment and is stressful. However, at

least one mother said that she found more support from others in the shelter than she had while living alone.

In many cases, the mothers, fathers and children in the shelters seemed to have built a sense of community arising from their shared crisis of homelessness. Several noted that they try to support one another during their difficulties.

Crowding and a lack of privacy is frequently experienced in shelters. There is often a lack of space. Dormitory style sleeping, lounging and eating facilities available in many shelters do not afford families much privacy. Some shelters provide private or semi-private rooms to families as space is available. Even though these rooms are usually quite small and crowded, they provide at least some private space.

SCHOOLING AND HOMELESS CHILDREN

According to parents and shelter workers, there are three areas where school policies seem to be affecting homeless children and families. These include: residency requirements and the access to information about them, transportation requirements and the inherent scheduling demands they pose for school districts, and the cost to homeless parents of providing school materials.

Residency Requirements

Misinformation about residency requirements is common.

Parents who become homeless often do not know how residency requirements affect their child's school assignment. Parents frequently assume, often mistakenly, that moving into a shelter will mean that their child must change schools. To avoid changing schools, a parent may decide to leave older children with relatives or friends. Often, the schools are not informed that the family has changed residence or that it is without a residence. Many times parents said that their older children refused to come with them to the shelter because they thought it would mean that they would have to change schools. Sometimes, arrangements even more precarious than the shelter were used for these children.

Some parents believe enrollment changes are universal. Attending the school nearest a shelter is a desirable option for some, but not for all homeless children. Some parents indicated that their child seemed to be happier going to school with the other children from the shelter enrolled in the nearby school. However, more parents seemed to feel that changing schools would be detrimental to their child, especially if their child was doing well in school.

Transportation

Delays in providing school transportation often result in school absences of 5 to 10 days. Usually these delays are reportedly related to the processing time required for the school district to contact the transportation service they contract with, and arrange for a child to be picked up at a new location.

Parental responsibility for transportation usually is an impossibility since most parents who are homeless cannot afford the expense of a car. Many parents reportedly try to take their children to school on city buses, but this requires both money and time which is not always available.

Cab service from shelters to schools which is provided by at least two school districts, sometimes compromises a child's need for feeling safe about who drives them to school. The same cab driver is not dispatched to pick up the same children everyday. A number of shelter operators mentioned that the children do not feel comfortable riding with strange drivers.

School supplies

The cost of providing school materials is especially burdensome to a homeless parent who has little or no money and is under great pressure to save enough money to arrange permanent housing so they can move the family out of the shelter.

BEHAVIORAL ADJUSTMENTS

The adjustments required of children as they try to cope with their experience of homelessness are many. Dislocation from familiar surroundings, separation from family members, the stimulation of meeting new people and the parents' tension are some of the many stressors mentioned that children face. According to parents and shelter staff, younger children have an easier time as long as they are with their mothers. All of the children must adjust to the new rules at the shelter and if they are transferring to a new school, they face additional new rules.

The children

Feelings of anger, insecurity, fear, and shame frequently plague children who are homeless. Older children are often angry at their parents for not being able to prevent the family's homelessness. Many parents and shelter operators said that the uncertainty of the situation made many children feel insecure and fearful, and the stigma of homelessness made them feel shamed.

Self-confidence is often eroded by the experience of being homeless. There seems to be a stigma attached to being homeless, so much so, that children feel they are treated differently. Children said they had not told any friends that they were living in a shelter. According to parents and shelter staff, some children don't make close friends at school because they are afraid their homelessness will be discovered. Some children who had been in many shelters, seemed to be resistant to any gestures of kindness or offers of friendship from shelter staff or other children.

Coping strategies used by children to handle the stress of homelessness vary in individual ways, according to parents and shelter staff. Regressive behaviors such as temper tantrums, thumbsucking, and bedwetting were frequently cited. Withdrawal behavior, extreme shyness and symptoms of depression seem to be ways that children react to their situation. Many children reportedly exhibit much more aggressive behavior upon coming to a shelter than they had in the past.

Inability to concentrate on school work is frequently the result of the stress and uncertainty children experience when they are homeless. Home-School coordinators acknowledge that homeless children have much more on their minds than just reading and writing.

Individual and age differences are apparent in how a child adjusts to the family's homeless situation. Most of the adults interviewed agreed that being homeless is more difficult for older children because they have a better understanding of what has happened to the family.

Teachers and school personnel

A child's self-esteem is affected by the attitudes conveyed to children through the words and actions of adults. Many parents felt that their children were very sensitive to comments made by their teachers and principals. Even well-intentioned comments, especially made in front of other children, can be construed by a child as negative. For the most part, parents themselves were grateful for gestures of support and said that it had made the situation easier for their children.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF HOMELESS CHILDREN & YOUTH

School attendance problems among homeless children and youth arise not only because of the difficult logistics occasioned by the uncertainty of their shelter but also because of the impact on the self-esteem and the learning readiness of the children. These impacts can have profound, long term effects on the educational attainment of children. As our census of homeless children indicates, school attendance among

teenagers is much less than among elementary age students. There are many reasons for this pattern, but we have the sense they are more social than academic.

Reasons for non-attendance

The initial family crisis and disruption resulting in homelessness often makes school attendance impossible for one to two weeks or at least until the family finds shelter.

Periodic destabilization, which may occur if a family must move from one shelter location to another, is a main cause of absenteeism.

Uncertainty about future plans often causes parents to keep children out of school until they know where they will be living permanently. Parents want to spare their children the burden of undue moving from school to school. Many shelters recognize that parents often get so preoccupied with trying to plan for the family's future that school for the children becomes a low priority. By requiring that school age children be enrolled in school, many shelters have reduced the number of children who are not attending school.

Reasons for erratic attendance

Undependable transportation services have been blamed by parents and shelter operators for many unnecessary absences. Transportation services which may have been arranged and proceeding smoothly, may unexpectedly not arrive, leaving the child with no way to get to school unless someone from the shelter can transport them.

The poor self-esteem of many homeless children is a major reason for absenteeism according to shelter staff. Children are often embarrassed to go to school because they feel inadequate, don't have clean clothes, or they lack something essential for the school day such as holiday valentine cards or a Halloween costume.

Difficulty in forming school friendships is often a result of the stigma of being homeless. Many school age children experience great embarrassment over being homeless. Children who have had to move frequently seem to have an especially difficult time forming friendships. Without friends at school, the homeless child tends to feel like an outsider and often feigns illness so they won't have to go to school. Parents often feel guilty about how their children feel and don't make them go to school.

Frequent moving makes uninterrupted school attendance impossible. With every move, there seems to be at least a 5 to 10 day absence from school for most homeless children.

Attendance impacts on children

Missing a significant percentage of the school year is the cumulative result of the many factors interfering with regular school attendance for many homeless children.

Failure to acquire basic skills is often the result of cumulative absences caused by the frequent moving entailed by chronic homelessness.

Erosion of self-confidence in the classroom occurs as an effect of the combination of erratic attendance, low self esteem, failure to acquire basic skills, and problems developing friendships.

SHELTER LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Most shelters for the homeless in the state do not provide school age children with an adequate environment for learning. Few have educational resources or dedicated space for students to read or do school work.

Atmosphere for study in shelters

Controls on shelter access prevent children in some shelters from being able to come and go as they need to in the shelter before and after school.

Few desks or tables are available for children to use for doing homework, studying, putting puzzles together, etc. Many shelters have no place at all for studying.

High noise levels attributed to high density group living in facilities designed for other purposes, frequently interfere with a child's ability to concentrate on school work.

Frequent distractions are common due to the sometimes chaotic atmosphere in large shelters produced by the large numbers of young children and adults occupying the space.

Availability of materials

Supplies, study resources and other materials for homework are not routinely available in most shelters.

Lack of age-appropriate reading material is common, even in shelters which have small libraries for children.

Help with homework

Parents face many other pressing demands on their time and energy and therefore, they are often not able to be of much help with homework during a stressful period of homelessness.

Shelter staff lack the time to adequately assist children in doing their homework. Attempts to organize volunteers at the shelters for this purpose have so far been unsuccessful.

FACTORS AFFECTING HOMELESS CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health issues affecting homeless children were common to all the shelters visited. The safety issues that emerged were more specific to individual shelters.

Health Issues

The incidence of contagious disease is unavoidably higher in shelters due to group living situations. Lice were not seen as a problem by most shelter staff, even though home-school coordinators expressed concern about it in general.

Stress-induced symptoms and illnesses are common among homeless children according to parents and shelter staff. Stomach aches, headache, "shelter shock" (listlessness) and "shelter rash" (nervous skin reaction) were mentioned.

Safety Issues

Children may not have "a place to be" before and after school since many shelters are not open twenty-four hours a day.

Shelters located in unsafe neighborhoods are not safe places for children. Their safety is in jeopardy if they are outside unaccompanied by an adult. Instances of children being beaten up on the way to and from school and in parks were found to be occurring and seem to be related to the children's neighborhood status as shelter residents.

Noteworthy transportation arrangements to schools may compromise safety. These seem to concern two different situations. The first example are cases in which young children ride city buses across the city by themselves because they want to continue to go to the same school. The second situation regards cab services which often send different drivers each day to pick up children. The lack of continuity among drivers is a source of fear among some students.

Mentally ill shelter residents pose potential dangers to children whenever they are sheltered in close proximity to one another. Shelter staff are aware of this, and they attempt to monitor the situation, as well as require that parents keep their children with them at all times. This has minimized problems.

ON BEING HOMELESS

OVERVIEW:

Our qualitative findings are based on nearly 120 interviews in a dozen shelters across the state. The field notes from the work are extensive. We have organized, in this section of the report, a small selection of comments about being homeless in the words of those interviewed.

In the words of homeless children:

"This is our first time in a shelter."

"It's no good, just being here."

"They give us what we need, like food and soap and things."

"Day-care is good."

"I don't like the (strange) man who lives here."

"My teacher asks me stupid questions like, 'Do I need clothes, when I come to school fully dressed everyday, and she asks me do I need clothes!'"

"How can I keep my mind on lessons when we are constantly moving."

"The bus picks me up in front of this stupid place, it makes me want to kill somebody."

"Compared to other shelters, this one looks good."

"None of my friends know I'm here."

"I don't tell anyone my problems."

"Nobody but my principal knows I'm here."

"If your principal knows, doesn't your teacher know?"

"I hated my mother for making us come here. My sister didn't want to come with us so she stayed with someone else; my brother didn't come either."

"I don't like that my mom can't help herself."

"Being homeless is no good."

"They (shelter staff) unlock your rooms and go in. When you're at your own house they don't do that."

"I don't like going to bed at 9 o'clock."

"I just don't like being here."

In the words of homeless parents:

"It's harder on the older ones because they understand the situation." (FF#12)

"Sometimes there isn't a choice (about living in a shelter). Right now this is a secure place." (FF#7)

"They (school administration) don't keep records confidential." (FF#7)

"My son had a gun pointed in his face by a teenager who told him he should be blown away because he wasn't worth anything anyway." (FF#7)

"The way my son is starting to dress shows he's losing his self-respect." (FF#7)

"My daughter had extra homework just because she lives here." (FF#7)

"They (landlords) won't rent to you. They think you (a single woman with children) won't pay your bills." (FF#27)

"My children and I lived in a flea-infested van for three weeks before we could get into the shelter." (FF#27)

"We've always had our own place. We had rules and he had chores to do at home." (FF#12)

"You may want something better for yourself, but I feel like you have to accept what they tell you." (FF#12)

"My kids are used to going out in the backyard until I say it's time for dinner." (FF#12)

"It makes you a little more protective of the children. I give them a little more attention." (FF#12)

"My three-year old baby said, Momma, I want you to buy us a house and a TV." (FF#12)

"You get really stressed out when your time is up." (FF#12)

"I get so depressed I just try to go to sleep." (FF#27)

In the Words of Home-School Coordinators

"Being homeless takes a greater toll on the older child who can understand what is happening to them."

"Our little people have so much more on their minds than reading and writing."

"I have seen a case where the Salvation Army made a difference for the rest of the child's life. They provided counseling, assurance and security and a relationship on which they could depend."

"Many children who become homeless fall behind academically. They often miss quite a lot of school and even when they attend school, their body may be present at school, but they are not attending to task."

"Shelters try hard to keep kids in school."

"We can't keep up with them when they move frequently."

(home-school coordinators: FF#3)

In the Words of Shelter Staff:

"No one is looking at the stress a homeless child has on them. It is tremendous." (FF#4)

"We see a lot of angry outbursts, or they direct their anger inwards or at their parents. Often they just withdraw." (FF#6)

"There is a problem with absenteeism from school, and there are three main reasons: lack of organization on the parents' part, illness, and the shame factor. The kids don't want to go, and the parent's feel guilty about the situation, so they don't make them go." (FF#6)

"Some parents blame their children for everything that goes wrong." (FF#6)

"These children are really responsible, but they have a rebellious streak." (FF#6)

"The children look upon adults as being untrustworthy." (FF#6)

"They (the children) feel they are not allowed to express their feelings." (FF#7)

"In most shelters like ours, every ounce of space is utilized. So there is no place to do homework, except on their bed. We no longer have a quiet period for children."

"I've been transporting two kids for eight weeks to keep them from dropping out of school." (FF#27)

"Within the past month and a half, one child has not been picked up by the bus on 14 school day mornings." (FF#18)

Comments from the shelter questionnaire:

"Our center is in a middle-class school district. Children (school age) coming to our center leave one school district, enter ours, re-register, after two months at the center go to often times a third school district. The county needs to provide transportation to children in temporary residences so that they can continue to attend their original school until the family is stabilized."

"The children who come to the shelter with their mother sometimes have been physically and/or sexually abused. Almost all of them have been emotionally abused. Often we have seen children that are so damaged, that we know at some point they will be murdering and raping women. When a child has severe problems the mother must get them in counseling while staying at the shelter. Educationally the system should be set up to teach children how to prevent victimization through such things as teaching how to form violence-free relationships."

"Parents' attitude during homeless period is often negative."

"We do not have a shelter in Howard county. We have transients that we provide a night lodging at a local motel, give them breakfast and gas money and they leave. Most of our homeless problems are "young", females with small children. They are living with friends and sometimes relatives."

"(Children are) discouraged by lack of continuity of schools and friendships. Children's sense of stability is almost non-existent with frequent moves."

"All of our mothers want their children in school and to my knowledge, they attend regularly. Usually the first thing a mother does on entering the shelter system is get the school age children settled in school."

"There is so much going on for the kids and the parents don't have the patience to respond in their own state of crisis."

"Because we are basically a rural area with a farm economy, the homeless are usually families returning to the area where they have relatives, and therefore are not in shelter or on the street. The children of school age, however, do not usually start into a school system because of the uncertainty of where they will be a week later."

"Our city has four elementary schools with attendance depending on the area of residence. I hesitate to help place a homeless child in one of the schools, knowing that in a few days when a more permanent residence is found, another change may be necessary."

"Parents' inability to understand changing school systems."

"Sustained perserverence of case workers and school personnel to follow up homeless family children not in school or in shelters is needed."

"Parents (are) not being able to enroll their children because they lack identification, social security cards, birth certificates, etc. Especially for families moving here from out of state the delays decrease the child's interest in school. Transportation can be the biggest barrier or the biggest help to getting and keeping kids in school. If transportation and enrollment were made more accessible, most parents and children would be likely to enroll and attend school continuously. As it is, education is just one more thing that needs paperwork, phone calls, and visits and homeless families already have a lot of that kind of stuff on their plate."

"There are two barriers: no home, bad schools. Please do not put your energy on band-aid solutions. Without a home, no matter how good of a "program" you can develop, these are an enormous barriers. Work for housing and good education. We only need two things: homes and good schools."

"I must state, that the people we have in our emergency shelter treat the shelter like home. We also provide free clothing and shoes when necessary. We try to encourage family closeness while the family is in the shelter and stress to the mother that this is the time to renew her relationship with the children, by answering all the child's questions, helping with homework everyday and expressing more love and closeness. This kind of encouragement has made our families stronger and many have re-established their families."

VI. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

OVERVIEW

School administrators are the educational leaders of their communities and are well informed of developments within their districts. In order to solicit their opinions regarding homeless children, a questionnaire was developed posing a dozen questions in an "open-ended" format so that administrators could express their opinions regarding homelessness in their own words. The cover page of the questionnaire explained the survey's purpose and provided the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act definition of homelessness so that respondents would have a shared frame of reference regarding homelessness.

The comments of each administrator were coded by question number and typed into a word processor by district. The items were then sorted by question so that the perceptions of all the administrators could be assessed item by item. Appendix D, a separate report, contains 95 pages of written responses by administrators in item order. Several respondents included district policy statements regarding enrollment practices. In this portion of the report we provide an overview of opinions regarding each item along with a listing of each question and a sampling of verbatim responses.

When considering comments from across the state it is important to remember that Missouri is an extremely diverse state. Consequently, the impacts of social and economic trends are perceived differently by residents in different regions of Missouri. The economic and demographic characteristics of the central cities of St. Louis and Kansas City are quite different from their metropolitan fringes and from rural parts of the state. There is also great diversity among Missouri's rural areas. While much of northern Missouri has experienced population decline associated with changes in the structure of agriculture, most of the southern part of the state has experienced population increases associated with a booming retirement and recreation industry.

This diversity is also reflected in the organization and characteristics of school districts. For example, among the 451 Missouri school districts which operate high schools, 160 have high school enrollments below 500 students and together account for a total enrollment of 21,760 students. At the same time, the largest 31 districts enroll a total of 107,954 of the state's 254,338 high school students. It is therefore not surprising that school administrators have different perceptions of how pervasive homelessness is in their districts. Administrators in some areas confront homeless children every day while others rarely encounter children they view as homeless.

Most respondents seem to hold the view that if a child is in the district for a legitimate reason then he/she will be enrolled. However, most have had little or no experience with children they consider homeless. Among those whose districts have encountered explicit homelessness there is the widely held view that they are coping with the problem on a case by case basis using local resources. There is a desire on the part of many administrators to focus on the schooling of children, and not their social-economic circumstances and family situations.

Residency Requirements and Homeless Children

Residence within the district was specifically mentioned as a requirement for attendance in 70% (139) of the 200 written responses to this item. Among the 61 other responses in which residence was not specifically mentioned, 35 responded that there were no residency requirements which might affect the enrollment of a homeless child; Missouri state statutes were cited a dozen times; nine administrators indicated that guardianship was the only issue; and 9 others provided a variety of other responses. Guardianship was also raised as a requirement 39 times along with residence and so together it was reported nearly 25% (48) of the time as an enrollment issue.

Placement of Homeless Children

With few exceptions, respondents indicated that their districts had no specific policies regarding homeless children, but would enroll a homeless child like any other child. Several respondents pointed to potential problems with obtaining previous school records for homeless children and indicated that if necessary they would test, evaluate and place the child accordingly. One respondent indicated that lack of records might be a problem regarding graduation credit at the secondary level.

Enrollment Difficulties for Homeless Children

Most respondents indicated that there were no policies and procedures which make it difficult to enroll a homeless child in their districts. Among the items listed by many were: residence, guardianship, an address, shot immunization records and birth certificates, suspensions or expulsions from other schools, emergency contact persons.

Enrollment Disputes Regarding Placement of Homeless Children

The overwhelming number of responses indicate that most districts have not encountered children they perceive to be homeless, and consequently they have had no placement disputes and therefore have developed no specific policies.

Homeless Children and School Records

With few exceptions respondents felt that the existing practice of the new school requesting records directly from the old school was the best practice.

The Enrollment Process

Nearly all respondents indicated that their enrollment process for homeless children is the same as for all children. Most indicated that they had not enrolled homeless children and therefore they had no experience with any difficulties. Transferring can take anywhere from twenty minutes to four weeks. Most respondents indicated that they would arrange a temporary placement immediately and then adjust if

necessary based upon teacher feedback and a review of school records once they were obtained.

Transportation and Homeless Children

Respondents indicated that they would make the same transportation arrangements for homeless children that they do for all their other children.

Communications with the Parents of Homeless Children

Respondents have had little experience with contacting homeless parents and suggested a variety of communication possibilities including sending notes with the children, phone, mail, visits and contacts via shelters or group homes.

Successful Programs Serving Homeless Children

There were no formally developed programs cited. There is a willingness expressed to help meet the needs of homeless children on a case by case basis using local resources patched together in practical, temporary solutions to what are generally perceived to be transient situations.

Assistance Desired

The type of assistance appears to depend on the nature of the community the district serves. The smaller districts generally believe that they are managing what problems they encounter rather well and see no need for outside assistance. Districts which have been impacted by larger numbers of obviously homeless children appear to favor more institutionalized responses and a greater commitment of resources. They indicate that more clear guidelines about what constitutes homelessness and its implications relative to ADA would be helpful.

Resources Needed

Most of the respondents believe that to the extent that they have experienced homeless children, they have been able to attend to their needs with local resources. A few, presumably those heavily impacted by homelessness, indicated a need for more resources and especially for communication among related helping agencies. A few raised the funding issue relative to average daily attendance regulations. One respondent concluded that someone should provide housing.

SAMPLE OF RESPONSES TO THE ITEMS

- 1. What residency requirements does your school district have which might affect the enrollment of a homeless child or youth?**

We follow state law and regulation. We don't refuse services to anyone of school age unless we have reason to believe they are residing in another district.

We are very liberal and understanding. If a student makes his home in the district we will serve him.

We do not have a policy that specifically addresses the homeless. Our enrollment requirement is simply residing within the district.

We are fortunate in that we do not have homeless children, but residency requirements would not keep them out of school if they are seeking an education.

If a child is domiciled in our district and guardianship is established, the child will be enrolled. We have no homeless shelters in our community. If we did have a homeless shelter, we would enroll the children in school.

- 2. What is your school district's policy regarding school placement of homeless children and youth?**

Students are placed based upon previous school records. With no records, the students are tested and their achievement and age are taken into consideration.

We have no formal policy, if they are here we will let them attend.

No policy has been developed in this district dealing specifically with homeless children. I would assume that policy concerning homeless children would be the same as all children.

No specific policy dealing with the homeless. If no records exist we would test, evaluate and place. This would be a difficult problem in the secondary level in determining credit toward graduation requirements.

There is no written policy concerning the placement of homeless children. Our community has three group homes for children and their enrollment is treated in the same manner as any entering student.

We do not have a written policy. We will accept them.

We will do what ever necessary to see that all children have a safe, secure place to live.

3. **What policies and procedures exist which make it difficult to enroll a homeless child in your district?**

There are no separate policies.

Children enrolled in our school have a home. If a situation should arise where a homeless child came to us, the Division of Family Services and/or Juvenile officer would be contacted for placement in a foster home, or whatever legally needed to be done.

None--and, if there were some, do you think I'd report them? [Actually, respondents have been very frank. Ed.]

1. There needs to be a school/social welfare liaison individual for each school. 2. There needs to be a child advocate for each homeless school child.

Do not want to enroll students who have been expelled or suspended from another district -- school patrons are not receptive to people who are on drugs etc.

Appropriate placement is difficult if child has been moved from school to school frequently.

Probably none unless it would be the things mentioned already [questions 1 and 2]. If we received a child who had no relative or acquaintance in the district we would be concerned about the child having supervision or support while away from school.

The state residency requirements may make this a problem. A complicator is the phenomenon whereby students try to cross school district boundary lines (for a number of reasons; athletics, perceived better educational program, leaving home, etc.). As a result we try to be reticent: this could impact a student who in fact has no residence.

We have a flexible, humanitarian attitude toward children with problems of poverty etc. We have not dealt with homeless individuals, but do not anticipate difficulties with regard to policy and procedure.

We research each case and pull together the necessary individuals to assist these students. We do not have specific restrictions. Need is our guide.

4. **How are disputes regarding placement of homeless children and youth resolved?**

Appeal to the central office and then to the board of education.

By decision of the superintendent and board of education--may be necessary to consult with the Department of Social Services or juvenile officer.

There are no formal procedures just for these situations. These disputes would be handled through the administrative chain of command as other disputes are.

Such disputes are handled by the superintendent of schools and the principal. Assistance is afforded by the visitation teacher/social worker, Division of Family Services, and the juvenile officer.

We place them where we think they belong and from that point we take the recommendations of the teacher and counselor.

Investigation of the circumstances by the home coordinator or building principal.

5. **What method for transferring the records of homeless children do you recommend?**

Same as used for all other students. Records are forwarded upon request.

I would suggest giving the child a copy of the school's name and address to take to his next school so that school could request a transcript.

A signed request from the school where child is to attend. Signature must be from a legally appointed guardian.

The "receiving" school should call the "sending" school for enrollment/placement information the day the child enrolls. The sending school should follow-up by mailing the receiving school a complete copy of the child's records (academic, health, etc.).

6. **Describe the enrollment process used for a homeless child who is changing schools (within the district) and (transferring in from another district). How long does it take?**

Usual enrollment procedure.

It is the same for a homeless child as any other child, and it takes no longer.

The parent of the child who is enrolling signs a release of records form. This form is sent to the last school attended in order to obtain records. General information forms are also completed. It takes about one hour to complete the process.

Students shall submit evidence of achievement in grade last attended or grade placement can be adjusted on achievement tests given by district, can enroll same day.

Enrollment is done quickly--the grade transfer etc. is what takes time. We have students enroll and start classes the same day if they reside in the district.

Enrollment is immediate. Records from another district take approximately a week. Child is enrolled in a temporary program until records are received.

Child visits school counselor or principal. Attempts are made by enrolling school to establish legal guardianship or custody. Independent minors show proof of permanent residence. Checks made with Division of Family Services or Juvenile authorities. Time -- 2 to 5 days.

The enrollment process here takes an hour or less. Unless I were trying to secure housing for the child and his/her family, I do not anticipate that it would take any longer.

We enroll with a 2-3 day period. We seek information by phone if necessary. This has been a most difficult area to gather information. We take care of our children regardless of their family situation. We sometimes are not aware of the struggles within their home life that would place them in a least one incidence of homelessness within a given school year.

7. What transportation arrangements are made for homeless children?

The same transportation policy applies to all children. Bus services are provided for all children (1-12) outside a one mile radius of the attendance unit. All kindergarten children are transported to and from school.

They would probably be transported to wherever they stayed. We once had a family living in a tent. They were transported there and back. Normally these people find some sort of state or church assistance or move on.

8. How do you communicate with the parents of the homeless children enrolled in your school district?

Directly, if possible, or, if another agency such as Family Services, Juvenile, etc. has been involved, communication is with them.

Bulk mail.

Haven't been faced with this situation.

Come on now!

We don't. I'm getting confused with these questions. What is a homeless child? If they have parents are they still homeless? Do you mean homeless families? As far as I know we do not have any homeless families or children in this district.

We attempt to have a contact person who will know the whereabouts and how to contact the parents. If this is impossible, we would communicate, in writing, through the child.

Parents receive communication through the shelter.

Our experience has been limited to temporary situations with contact through family, friends or law enforcement personnel.

Depends on circumstances. May be by phone, letter or "home visit."

Depends on if they bring children in. Often have no phone. We would just contact juvenile officer and ask for a home placement.

This is very, very difficult and varies from family to family. The usual methods are by phone and mail.

We talk to the person in control of the shelter.

9. If you have examples of programs within your school district which have been particularly successful in serving homeless children please describe.

The juvenile "in-school-program" is used. This institution provides lodging and other types of supportive care and guidance.

Boys Ranch...has not been a problem.

We see to it that every child is serviced in our district. We make sure that they eat in the lunchroom, both lunch and breakfast. We also make sure that our nursing staff is aware of the child. We will tolerate nothing less than compassion for the child.

We don't complicate our enrollment for the homeless--we just don't seem to have any homeless. Sometimes we have people living with other people with the district and all are welcome here.

I believe our only homeless children have been high school students. They had jobs and made their own way and were in the regular high school program. If a homeless child in our district wants to attend school they can. The problem is more likely to be motivating them to attend.

11. **What kind of outside consultation would be helpful to you in identifying homeless students and assessing and meeting their needs?**

A clear set of guidelines would be helpful.

I don't think we need your help.

Our purpose is to educate them, not classify them.

Some type of interlinks are needed to include shelter representatives, DFS, DMH, public schools, law enforcement and church groups.

Workshop for teachers/staff.

We prefer that other agencies address the non-educational needs of the homeless leaving us to concentrate on their educational needs. We can operate on overlapping areas. Identification help would be useful.

We are a small district and pretty well know who these people are.

Someone to determine which students are eligible to attend the district school under DESE regulations for ADA.

Due to the size of our community and the communication between the school and the social agencies, outside consultation would not be a priority to our district. Larger districts may view this as a priority.

12. What additional resources are needed to serve homeless children in your district?

None at this time.

Our district is very fortunate to have state, county and city government agencies to call upon. Also, there are a number of private groups in the community who donate time and finances for needed help.

The present cooperative, and caring, attitude of personnel in local agencies, along with our schools, has been assuring meeting the needs of these children as the need becomes known. While "homeless" children, as per your definition, appear a minor problem in our district, we are always alert to such possibilities and attempt to provide for them immediately. A much more frequent problem in our area is that of children whose residence "floats" -- from grandparent, to aunt, etc.--especially past age 16.

Funding for needed clothing, supplies, etc.

This is not a large problem in this district at this time. Homeless children/families usually do not stay long.

Money, money, money.

Someone needs to see to it that all children and adults have a home!

Funding to offset the lost of property tax which a homeless child would not pay.

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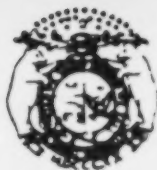
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APPENDIX A

Location and Number of Homeless Shelters Serving Children Which Responded to the Survey



APPENDIX B



NOV 02 1988

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 480
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI 65102

October 25, 1988

Dear Service Provider:

The growing incidence of children experiencing homelessness is of great concern to educators in Missouri. We know that nationwide, forty percent of homeless children are not attending school. We also realize there are many reasons for their non-attendance. Unfortunately, in Missouri, we do not know the numbers or locations of homeless children and youth or the barriers they face in accessing education. However, we believe all children have a right to an appropriate education whether or not they have a permanent address.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is developing a state plan to ensure that homeless children and youth have full access to the educational programs to which they are entitled. Researchers from the University of Missouri have been asked to design and carry out a study which will aid us in developing that plan. In about a week, you will be receiving a questionnaire from the research team. Your cooperation in completing the questionnaire is critical to identifying and eliminating some of the problems facing homeless children and youth.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and for your continued work toward addressing the needs of individuals and families who are homeless.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert E. Bartman".

Robert E. Bartman
Commissioner of Education



University Extension

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
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KNOWLEDGE WORKING
FOR MISSOURIANS

3112 Parkway
Columbia, MO 65211
(314) 882-1096

December 14, 1988

Dear Shelter Provider;

Enclosed is a questionnaire about the educational needs of homeless children. Somehow, the first one we mailed never reached you. The survey is important and we still need your input.

The state of Missouri is required by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act to develop a plan to address the educational needs of this special group of children. The questionnaire is part of a study being conducted at the request of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to determine how many children experience homelessness in Missouri and what problems they face in continuing their education.

This study is needed to increase the awareness of school personnel as to the educational barriers experienced by children when families are homeless. This information will enable the enable the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education to help school districts become better advocates for homeless children.

You were selected to receive the questionnaire because of your work with people who are seeking help in finding shelter and assistance to meet their needs. Your responses will be kept confidential, but will be very influential in developing the state plan.

Even if you do not serve children, please answer the first series of questions about the services you do provide and return the questionnaire anyway. This will let us know that you have seen the questionnaire.

Your perspective is very important to this study. We hope that you will find some time in your busy schedule to complete the questionnaire. It will take about thirty minutes to complete. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call. We need your questionnaire as soon as possible. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included for your convenience. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Cook
Research Associate

THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN: TOWARD A STATE PLAN



The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

and

**University Extension
Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis
Home Economics Extension**

The University of Missouri

November 1988

The Educational Needs of Homeless Children

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 mandates that barriers to education be removed so that homeless children are assured access to a free and appropriate education. Continuity in a child's educational experience is a crucial factor for successful learning. A child's school can provide stability when other aspects of the child's environment are not stable. This questionnaire is about how schools can become better advocates for homeless children. It will take about 30 minutes to complete. Thank you for helping with this study. We know your time is precious and we are grateful for the knowledge and insights you will be sharing with us. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Please answer all of the questions unless otherwise indicated.

Your name: _____ Your position _____

Q-1. The people your program serves. (please circle all that apply)

- a. Men
- b. Women
- c. Families with children (0-11 yrs.)
- d. Families with youth (12-18 yrs.)
- e. Unaccompanied minors

Q-2. The type of program you offer is: (please circle all that apply)

- a. Overnight shelter only
- b. Day shelter only
- c. 24-hour shelter
- d. Transitional housing program
- e. Referral center
- f. Congregate meal site
- g. Medical services
- h. Community Action Program
- i. None of the above

Q-3. CLIENT/SERVICES PROVIDED

Please mark "X" in the boxes which correspond to each service offered to each client group.

SERVICES	assessment	shelter	meals	case management: advocacy, arrangements, monitoring, follow-up etc.	medical services	psychological counseling	employment counseling	housing placement services	mail-message services	day care services	in-between meal snack	transportation
	CLIENTS											
children (0-11yrs.)												
youth (12-18 yrs.)												
women												
men												
families												

Q-4. RESPONDANT INFORMATION

We need to ask some background information about the person who fills out this questionnaire.

- A. My position here is: (please circle) paid staff volunteer staff
- B. How many years have you been working with homeless children? _____
- C. How many years have you been working in social service? _____
- D. How many years of education have you completed? _____
- E. Sex: (please circle) Female Male
- F. Race: (please circle) Asian Black Hispanic N.A.Indian White Other _____
- G. Describe any medical training you have. _____

NOTE: If you DO NOT operate a shelter or a transitional housing program please skip questions Q-5 to Q-13 and continue with question Q-14 on page 5. —————>>

If you DO operate a shelter or housing program please continue with Q-5:

↓
Q-5 Size of your facility - (rooms for resident use, excluding office):
(please circle)

- a. 1-2
- b. 3-4
- c. 5-6
- d. 7-8
- e. 9-10
- f. 11-12
- g. 13-14
- h. 15-19
- i. 20 or more

Q-6 Does your facility have more than one toilet?
(please circle/fill in)

- a. Yes, how many? _____.
- b. No

Q-7 Does your facility have private showers or bath?
(please circle)

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q-8 Does your facility have laundry machines?
(please circle)

- a. Yes
- b. No

page 3

Q-9. Number of people for which you have space: _____
(please fill in number)

Q-10. On Wednesday November 9, 1988, the total number of people served by your shelter or transitional housing program was:

The total number of people served was: _____
(please fill in number)

Q-11. How typical was Wednesday, November 9th? (please circle)

- a. More people than average
- b. Average number of people
- c. Fewer people than average

Q-12. How many homeless children and youth did your program serve on Wednesday, November 9th, 1988 . If possible, record the number by age and race. How many of them were in school? (please record below)

Homeless Children Served by your program on 11/9/88							Preschool/Elementary/Secondary	
Ages	TOTALS	Number of Children by Race					School Attendance	
years:		Asian	Black	Hisp.	Na.Am.	White	In school	Not in school
0-4								
5								
6-11								
12-14								
15								
16-18								

Q-13. On the average, how long do most people stay in your facility?
(please circle)

- a. Less than 1 week
- b. 1 to 2 weeks
- c. 1 month
- d. 3 months
- e. 6 months
- f. 12 months
- g. 18 months or more

Q-14. Does your shelter or program serve children. (please circle)

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q-15. Special facilities or services you have available for children:
(please circle all which apply)

- a. none
- b. playground
- c. nap area
- d. In-between-meal snacks
- e. toys
- f. child-sized toilets or "potty" chairs
- g. diapering area
- h. Infant formula preparation & storage area
- i. high chairs for meals

Q-16. Youth (12-18 yrs.) have needs much different from young children.
Please list any special facilities, equipment or services you have especially for them.

Q-17: Homeless children and their parents encounter many barriers which limit their access to the free and appropriate education to which they are entitled.

Think about the many problems faced by parents and children who are homeless. How often do you find that a child's access to education is affected by the barriers they encounter? (please mark with an "X")

I. How often do homeless children encounter these barriers to education?

		ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	DONT KNOW
a. Lack of sleep	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Hunger	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Lack of medical care	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Low self-esteem	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Emotional trauma	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Not feeling safe	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Personal hygiene	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Physical handicap	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. Chronic illness of parent	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
j. Chronic illness of child	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
k. Substance abuse	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
l. Depression	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
m. Other: _____ (describe)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

II. How often do homeless children encounter the following barriers to education?

(please mark with an "X")	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	DONT KNOW
a. Residency require- ments	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Problems getting Immunization records	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Problems getting school records	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Lack of transportation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Attendance rules	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Money for transport	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Other transportation difficulties	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Problems transferring between schools	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. District refusal to register children	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
j. Attitudes of school personnel	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
k. Attitudes of classmates	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
l. Cost of school supplies	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
m. Other: _____ (describe)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

III. How often do homeless children encounter the following barriers to education?

(please mark with an "X")

ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES RARELY NEVER DONT
KNOW

a. Family instability	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Lack of money	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Uncertainty about future	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Lack of permanent housing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Frequent moves	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Family violence or abuse	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Parents looking for a job	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Having to care for siblings	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. Lack of clothing for school	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
j. Parents don't believe education is important	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
k. Parents keep children out of school	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
m. Illiteracy of parent(s)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
n. Problems obtaining public assistance	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
o. Mental health problems	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
p. Parents don't have enough time for their children	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
q. Other: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

IV. How often do homeless children encounter these barriers to education?

(please mark with an "X")	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	DON'T KNOW
a. Fear of school	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Learning disability	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Behavior problems	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Developmental delays	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Lack of self-confidence	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Poor reading, writing and math skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Falling behind grade level	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Child is unhappy	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. English is a second language	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
j. Emotional problems	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
k. Child dislikes school	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
l. Child doesn't feel liked	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
m. Child doesn't trust people	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
n. Other: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

V. How often do homeless children encounter these barriers to education in their away-from school environment?

(please mark with an "X")	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	DON'T KNOW
a. Too much noise	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Lack of space to study	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Lack of privacy	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Lack of homework materials (i.e. books, paper, pencils)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Lack of help with homework	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Shelter is far from school	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Shelter is far from friends	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Access to a telephone	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. Other: (describe) _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

page 9

Q-18. Can you think of any other barriers to education or other special problems not already covered which are experienced by the children you serve? Please list and explain.

Q-19. When a child first comes to you for help, how do you identify his or her special needs?

(please mark with an "X")	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	DON'T KNOW
a. interview parents	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. talk to the child	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. observe the child	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. talk to older siblings	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. consult referral source	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. administer special tests	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. examine medically	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. other: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Q-20. If you use special diagnostic tests, which ones? Please list.

Q-21. How often do the children you serve need the following educational services? (please mark with an "X")

	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	DONT KNOW
a. special transportation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. easier way to get school records	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. removal of residency requirements	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. special tutoring in shelters	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. help with homework	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. "alternative" learning center	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. adult literacy education for parents	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. designated advocate/ombudsman on the school district's staff	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. day care so children are not responsible for siblings	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
j. study materials such as books, paper, pencils etc. in shelters	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
k. individual child counseling	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
l. greater sensitivity on the part of teachers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
m. access to "Headstart"	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
n. Others: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

page 11

Thank you for returning your completed questionnaire to:

**OSEDA
811 Clark Hall
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65211**

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL US
AT 314-882-7396**

THANK YOU!

**Would you like a copy of the results of this study?
(please circle)**

yes no

**Please make sure that the address we have for you is correct, and we will
send a copy of the report when it is available. Thank you again.**



University Extension

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Office of Social & Economic Data Analysis

KNOWLEDGE WORKING
FOR MISSOURIANS

811 Clark Hall
Columbia MO 65211
(314) 882-7396

December 1, 1988

Dear Superintendent:

In Commissioner Bartman's November 3 Newsletter it was noted that the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 requires that the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education develop a state plan for homeless children. The purpose of the plan will be to ensure that homeless children and youth have full access to educational programs to which they are entitled.

Our office has agreed to gather the information needed to develop this plan. The task is two-fold: 1) to assess the number of such children and their special needs, 2) to identify existing barriers which affect school enrollment and participation.

We have been quite successful in gathering information from emergency shelter operators, homeless parents, and community action programs. However, information from school personnel is critical to the validity of this effort. Therefore, in this phase of our research we are surveying a sample of Elementary Principals, home-school coordinators and social workers. We also need your input as you are most familiar with the situation in your district.

We would appreciate your response on the enclosed survey by next Friday, December 9th. Thank you for your assistance and your time.

Dr. Jeanne Morrison
Project Director

William Elder
Co-Director

Carolyn Cook
Research Associate

John Collins
Research Associate

**The Educational Needs of Homeless Children:
Toward a State Plan**

School Administrator's Survey

In compliance with the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, the Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education is developing a plan to assure that all school-age homeless children have access to the free and appropriate education entitled to all children who are residents of the state. The plan will be based on input from school personnel, homeless shelter operators and homeless parents.

Please answer the following questions as they pertain to your school district's experiences in serving children whose families have experienced homelessness for any period of time.

Name of School District _____

Person Completing Survey: _____ Phone: _____

As defined by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987:

"A homeless individual is one who (1) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence or (2) has a primary nighttime residence in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (Section 103 (a)(1)(2) of the Act).

Please attach any supporting documents which pertain to homeless children in your district.

Q-1. What residency requirements does your school district have which might affect the enrollment of a homeless child or youth?

Q-2. What is your school district's policy regarding school placement of homeless children and youth?

Q-3. What policies and procedures exist which make it difficult to enroll a homeless child in your school district?

Q-4. How are disputes regarding placement of homeless children and youth resolved?

Q-5. What method for transferring the records of homeless children do you recommend.

Q-6. Describe the enrollment process used for a homeless child who is changing schools (within the district) and (transferring in from another district). How long does it take?

Q-7. What transportation arrangements are made for homeless children?

Q-8. How do you communicate with the parents of the homeless children enrolled in your school district?

Q-9. If you have examples of programs within your school district which have been particularly successful in serving homeless children please describe. Please use additional space on back if necessary.

Q-10. Is there a contact person within the district who serves as a liason between the schools, shelters and other agencies serving the homeless?

Yes ____ No ____

If you said yes, who is this person?

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Q-11. What kind of outside consultation would be helpful to you in identifying homeless students and assessing and meeting their needs?

Q-12. What additional resources are needed to serve homeless children in your district?

Q-13. How many homeless children * were enrolled in your school district during the following time periods?

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>1987-1988 School Year</u>	<u>Sept. 1988 - Nov. 31, 1988</u>
Early Childhood (preschool)	_____	_____
Elementary (K-6)	_____	_____
Middle School (7-9)	_____	_____
High School (10-12)	_____	_____

* children who experienced at least one incidence of homelessness during the school year

Q-14. To facilitate further communication from this office, please designate the name and number of the appropriate contact person in your district.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please return this survey for data tabulation to:

The Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED A)
811 Clark Hall
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65211



University Extension

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Office of Social & Economic Data Analysis

"KNOWLEDGE WORKING
FOR MISSOURIANS"

811 Clark Hall
Columbia, MO 65211
(314) 882-7396

January 20, 1989

Dear Friends;

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 requires that the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education develop a state plan for homeless children. The purpose of the plan will be to ensure that homeless children and youth have full access to educational programs to which they are entitled.

Our office has agreed to gather the information needed to develop this plan. The task is two-fold: 1) to assess the number of such children and their special needs, 2) to identify existing barriers which affect school enrollment and participation.

We have been quite successful in gathering information from emergency shelter operators, homeless parents, and community action agencies and school administrators. However, an important part of this effort, is information from people, who based on the work they do, are likely to know the dimensions of homelessness in an area. We believe that you are a key source of information about the numbers of homeless children in the community you serve.

Enclosed is a short survey that we hope you can complete and return by January 30th, or as soon after as you are able. We know you are busy, but we also know you will understand the importance of the input you can offer this study. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Dr. Jeanne Morrison
Project Director

John Collins
Research Associate

Bill Elder
Co-Director

Carolyn Cook
Research Associate

KEY INFORMANT SURVEY OF HOMELESS CHILDREN & YOUTH

This survey is being conducted in compliance with the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. This federal law requires the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to determine the number of children and youth (less than 18-years old) who are homeless in the state.

We believe that because of the work you do, you are a key informant to estimate the problem in your service area. Please do not consult with other agencies; they are being surveyed too. If you have recorded information, please use it, if not please give your best estimate.

Please complete the following:

Agency: _____ Phone #: _____

Your name: _____ Position: _____

Homeless Children: According to the McKinney Act, to be homeless means that the individual, " (A) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence or (B) has a primary night-time residence in a supervised, public or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings."

- (1) Based upon your experience, how many children (under 18 years old), do you estimate were homeless for some period of time during 1988, in your area?

Total = _____

- (2) Of the Total:

- (a) What percent were girls ? _____ %
- (b) What percent were under the age of 6 yrs.? _____ %
- (c) What percent were between 6 and 11 yrs.? _____ %
- (d) What percent were between 12 and 17 yrs.? _____ %
- (e) What percent were alone and on their own ? _____ %
- (f) What percent were with adult family members? _____ %
- (g) What percent of the school age children were not regularly attending school? _____ %

Please return this survey to: **OSEDA**
811 Clark Hall
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65211

If you have any questions, please call Carolyn Cook at (314) 882-7396.
We know your time is precious. Thank you for your assistance.

February 9, 1989

Dear Friends;

Do you remember receiving a "Key Informant Survey on Homeless Children" a few weeks ago? We sent you one because the work you do in your community gives you, perhaps, a unique perspective to be aware of how often homelessness occurs. We still have not received your completed questionnaire.

This study is being conducted for the Missouri Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education. Your input is vital to the validity of the research. Even if you are not aware of homeless children in your community, we would still like to know that. If you need another survey form, please call us at (314) 882-7396. We look forward to receiving your completed form as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Cook
Research Associate



Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102